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SPIRITUAL WIVES.

VOL. II.



SPIRITUAL WIVES.

BY

WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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SPIRITUAL WIVES.

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT REVIVAL.

IN the year 1832, a loud and angry tempest rolled through a great part of the Teutonic heaven; especially through that part of the Teutonic heaven which spans the American continent; a thing new and weird, which has not yet had much attention paid to it by public writers; certainly not so much as from what is seen of its effect upon our religious thought and social life, it would seem to crave.

A great revival of religion then took place.

Of course revivals of religion have been seen in every country and in almost every age. A movement in the minds of men; quick, luminous, electrical, coming no one knows whence, wearing

itself out no one can tell why ; is one of the forms in which we see that the work of God is done upon this earth. A church, a city,—nay, a province, may be suddenly, unaccountably, changed and rapt by spiritual forces. Gifted men and women—men like Whitfield and Wesley ; women like Ann Lee and Lady Huntingdon—seem to carry this fiery fluid in their brains, to breathe it from their lungs, to shed it from their hands. Where such agents of the unseen forces come, disturbance of the conscience also comes ; so that men who are dead to the Gospel, when they only see it in the daily beauty of our service, pale and crouch with fear, as though they had been smitten by some unseen arm. Yet oftener still, the passion and the power well out from no visible source. A cry goes up from some village church, from some unknown lip, which sets a whole city, a whole province, rocking and reeling to the dust. Thus it happened in New Haven and New York in 1832. No man can tell how the Great American Revival came about ; nobody caused it, nobody could guide it, nobody could stop it. No revival in the past could vie, in either length of time, in width of area, or in strength of passion, with this Great Revival. Other movements had been personal, this movement was

national. One storm had raged round Whitfield ; another had found its centre in Ann Lee. The Great American Revival was the result of unknown efforts, of unrecorded inspirations. It has never been identified with a single name. Who can say where it first began ? Two large tracts of country, one in the state of New York, one in the state of Massachusetts, are to this day mapped in religious books, each as the original "burnt district;" the province over which the fiery tempest broke and swept, like a prairie fire ignited from the clouds.

We catch a first glimpse of this tempest raging on the shores of Lake Ontario, among the farms and hamlets of Oneida county and Madison county ; most of all, perhaps, among the homesteads standing on the banks of the two lovely sheets of water, called by the Indian names of Cayuga Lake and Oneida Lake. So far as I can learn, the men among whom it first broke out were not of very high name and fame. The Rev. James Boyle was known simply as a fair scholar, a fine preacher. The Rev. Luther Meyrick enjoyed the favour of a local church. The Rev. Hiram Sheldon, of Delphi, afterwards only too well known in New York, had not then been heard of

in the larger world. Jarvis Rider of De Ruyter, Horatio Foot of Manlius, Erasmus Stone of Salina, three ministers living in the burnt district of New York, could hardly boast of anything beyond a little fame on the country side, until the cause in which they toiled had put their names into the mouths of men. They did not make the revival; the revival made them.

Those in whom the spiritual leaven first began to work were working members of old and highly reputed churches. The Rev. Abram C. Smith, the story of whose life as the spiritual husband of Mary Cragin I shall have to tell in detail, was a Wesleyan Methodist. Marquis L. Worden, whose confessions will be found on a later page, was an Episcopalian Methodist. Luther Meyrick and James Boyle, the most eminent perhaps of these revival preachers, were Evangelicals. The Rev. Theophilus R. Gates, editor of *The Battle Axe*, and founder of a wild sect in Philadelphia, was an Independent. The Rev. John H. Noyes, the father of Pauline communism, was a Congregationalist. Cragin, the moral reformer, and Moore, the leader among Sunday-schools and Bible-classes, were both Presbyterians.

For more than a year, the facts which are seen

in all revivals where the scale is large and the country wild, were noticed in these burnt districts of New York and Massachusetts ; afterwards, as the fury spread abroad, they were seen in a hundred towns, in a thousand hamlets, of the United States. By a sudden prompting from within, so far as men could see, a number of orderly and reputable persons began to ask each other, in eager words and with pallid lips, how it stood with them in the great account. Were they ranked among the chosen ? Were they ready for the Lord's coming ? Did they feel in their souls that the Lamb had died for them, and that all their sins had been purged away ? Some could not answer. Some dared not face these questions. Who could tell that he was saved ? Many of those who were in doubt began to seek. Men who had never been at church before became constant hearers of the word. At first the old and steady preachers welcomed this change of mind ; their pews being now let, their sermons heeded, and their benches filled. But soon the frenzy of desire to know the best and worst rose high around them and above them, frothing beyond their guidance and control. A service once a-week was but as a drop of water on the lips of

men and women panting for a living brook. The churches had to be thrown open. At first an evening meeting was called for prayer; then a morning meeting; afterwards an hour was snatched from the busy noon; until at length some ministers took the course of keeping what was called an open house of God, from early dawn until long past midnight every day. Pallor fell on the bronze cheek, alarm invaded the callous heart. By night and day the chapels were crowded with sinners, imploring the Lord to have mercy on them. Heaven was assailed by multitudes of souls, conscious of sin and peril, and seeking to take the judgment-seat by storm. The church brimmed over, so to speak, into the street. Rooms were hired; school-rooms, dancing-halls, even theatres; every place that would hold a congregation became a church. In the country districts, camps were formed for prayer; a cart became a pulpit, a tent a chancel, the stump of a tree an altar; while hundreds of wandering and unauthorized preachers, male and female, took the field against Satan and the flesh. In the agony which grew upon men's souls, the regular clergy came to be esteemed as dumb and faithless witnesses for the truth. Farmers and tinkers, loud of voice and fierce of

aspect, ran about the country, calling on sinners to repent, and flee from the wrath to come. All ranks and orders were confounded in a common sense of danger, and the ignorant flocks who had gathered round these prophets of doom, were easily persuaded that the calm and conservative churches of the world, which looked on all these doings sad and silent, were dead and damned.

This spiritual tempest crossed the Atlantic Ocean into England, and the English Channel into Germany, in both of which countries it found a people more or less open to its unspent power. In America, where it was native and national, it had a wider success and a longer reign than in Europe; but in England and in Germany it kept up a faint and irregular kind of activity for many years. In truth, no one can assert that in either country, any more than in America, its force is spent and its service done.


CHAPTER II.

FIRST BURNT DISTRICT.

THE new Pauline Church of America, founded in the course of this Great Revival, was divided from the first into two great branches and many sub-branches. The first professors of holiness had their home at Manlius, in the state of New York, with the Rev. Hiram Sheldon as their leader and expositor; the second had their home at Yale College, in the state of Connecticut, afterwards at Putney, in the state of Vermont, with the Rev. John H. Noyes as leader and expositor: but these centres of holiness were not fixed and final; these chiefs of the Perfect Church did not reign alone. In America, no place is the sole seat of empire, and no first-man has an undisputed reign. Sheldon's power was shared by the Rev. Jarvis Rider, the Rev. Martin P. Sweet, and the Rev. Erasmus Stone. Noyes, on his side, had to consult, and sometimes to follow, the Rev. James Boyle and the Rev. Theophilus R. Gates.

This Pauline Church—professing to have been founded on a new series of visions, intimations, and internal movements of the Spirit—taught the doctrine that man may attain to the perfect state, in which he shall be cleansed from sin and made incapable of sin. Into the dogmatic part of this question, thus raised, I need not enter, since it is a very old theory in the Church, and has found some favour in the eyes of orthodox and exalted saints. The testimony, both of Sheldon and his followers, also of Noyes and his followers, was that they had been saved from sin by the power of faith, and were entering upon the enjoyment of perfect love.

In the winter months of 1834, a general convention of the New York Perfectionists was called at Manlius, a village of cotton-mills, in Onandaga county, six or seven miles from Oneida Lake. The people, who assembled in a beerhouse, heard the new gospel proclaimed by Hiram Sheldon from Delphi, Erasmus Stone from Salina, Jarvis Rider from De Ruyter; the meeting was warm in tone, and many of the young factory girls were drawn that day to a closer knowledge of the Lord. At Manlius, the chosen took upon themselves the name of "Saints." Here they announced



their separation from the world. Here they began to debate whether the old marriage vows would or would not be binding in the new heaven and the new earth. "When a man becomes conscious that his soul is saved," says Noyes, "the first thing that he sets about is to find his Paradise and his Eve." It is a very sad fact, which shows in what darkness men may grope and pine in this wicked world, that when these Perfect Saints were able to look about them in the new freedom of Gospel light, hardly one of the leading men among them could find an Eden at home, an Eve in his lawful wife.

The doctrine openly avowed at Manlius was, that with the old world which was then passing away would go all legal bonds and rights; that old ties were about to become loosened, and old associations to end; including those of prince and liege, of cleric and layman, of parent and child, of husband and wife. These old rights were to be replaced by new ones. A kingdom of heaven was at hand; and in that kingdom of heaven every man was to be happy in his choice. And it was not only right, but prudent, to prepare betimes for that higher state of conjugal bliss. The doctrine taught in the privacy of the love-

feast and the prayer-meeting was, that all the arrangements for a life in heaven may be made on earth ; that spiritual friendships may be formed, and spiritual bonds contracted, valid for eternity, in the chapel and the camp. Hence it became quickly understood among them that the things of time were of slight account even in this earthly life ; and that the things of heaven were to be considered as all in all. Not that any rule came into vogue which either led, or looked like leading, to a breach of the social law. On this point all the witnesses speak one way. Judged by their daily lives, Sheldon and his followers struck the mere observer as men who lived by higher rule and a better light than their neighbours of the Lake country. If they sang of their return from Babylon, it was with a staid and sober joy. If they had escaped from bonds, they saw that the world had still some claims upon their conduct. From of old the letter and the spirit had been at war ; in their new condition the Saints were called to bear witness against the flesh ; yet the spirit and the letter should be held to a fair account with each other in their words and deeds. In truth, the first tendencies of this Pauline Church were rather

towards an ascetic than towards an indulgent life.

Among the persons whom this great revival had brought into notice was Miss Lucina Umphreville, of Delphi, a young lady of high descent, of good ability, of engaging manner, and of great personal beauty. She was an early convert, and her strong will, aided by her sweet face, gave her a leading influence in the sect. Lucina claimed to have visions, intuitions, inspirations, on many points of faith ; more than all others, on the relations of the two sexes in the Redeemer's kingdom. These relations were the constant theme of her discourses. Like Ann Lee, the foundress of Shakerism, she held that in the day of grace all love between the male and female must be chaste and holy. Hence she raised up her voice against wedlock and the wedded rule. She held that the females must not think of love ; that the men must not woo them ; that the church must not celebrate the marriage rite ; and that those who had already passed beneath the yoke must live as though they had not.

Most of the women, I am told, fell into Lucina's ways of thinking on this subject. No article was adopted, for articles were not the

fashion in New York. But the young farmers and artisans in the burnt district, who had thought their course of love running smooth enough, were suddenly perplexed by coyness and reserve on the part of girls who had heretofore greeted them with smiles and kisses. A mob of lasses began to dream dreams, to interpret visions, directed against love and marriage, as love and marriage were understood by an unregenerate world. Some of those girls who were old enough to have been engaged, threw up their lovers. Younger girls held off from the coarser sex. Married women grew dubious as to their line of duty; which doubt and fear led, where the husbands happened to be worldly-minded, into many a serious breach of domestic peace. In fact, these female saints had become so good that the young men of the district said they were good for nothing.

Lucina Umphreville, the cause of so many breaking hearts, was generally denounced by the men as Miss Anti-marriage. But, like Elderess Antoinette of Mount Lebanon, Lucina Umphreville did not condemn the male and female saints to live a life apart, and thus to become absolute strangers to each other. Young herself, and full of love for her kind, she allowed some play to the

higher affections, so long as these should be exercised only in the Lord. Men and women might be friends, though she could not permit them to become lovers and mistresses. Under Lucina's guidance, for in these things Sheldon himself could not fight against her, a sweet and perilous privilege was assumed by these New York saints of entering into new and mysterious bonds of the spirit. In this friendship of souls the law was to have no voice, the flesh no share; male and female were to be brother and sister only; they might address each other in sacred terms, and grant to their beloved the solace of a holy kiss. Beyond these freedoms they were not to go; and even these sweet privileges were to be put aside on any movement in the heart suggesting an unchaste desire. The love was to be wholly pure and free. No law was ever laid down; but it was tacitly agreed among the saints that these tender passages of soul with soul were not to be made the subject of idle talk. An air of silence and reserve, if not of secrecy, was thought to befit so solemn an encounter of spirits; and every one was expected to guard in his fellow a right which he was free to exercise for himself. So intimate a connexion of the male

and female saints was likely to become known by a special and striking name. Some one in the Church suggested that this new relation of souls was that of the spiritual husband to his spiritual bride.

So far as I can see, the name appears to have been first used in New York by the Rev. Erasmus Stone, a revival preacher at Salina, the famous salt village lying on the shore of Onondaga Lake. In the early days of the revival, Stone had seen a vision of the night. A mighty host of men and women filled the sky ; a sudden spirit seemed to quicken them ; they began to move, to cross each other, and to fly hither and thither. A great pain, an eager want, were written on their faces. Each man appeared to be yearning for some woman, each woman appeared to be moaning for some man. Every one in that mighty host had seemingly lost the thing most precious to his heart. On waking from his slumber, Stone, who had perhaps been reading Plato, told this dream to his disciples in the salt-works. When his people asked him for the interpretation of his dream, he said, that in the present stage of being, men and women are nearly always wrongly paired in marriage ; that his vision was the day of judgment ; that the

mighty hosts were the risen dead, who had started from the grave as they had been laid down, side by side ; that the trouble which had come upon them was the quick discerning of the spirit that they had not been truly paired on earth ; that the violent pain and want upon their faces were the desires of every soul to find its natural mate.

Reports of this vision of the night, and of Stone's interpretation of it, ran like a prairie-fire through the revival camp. Sheldon adopted this idea of a spiritual affinity between man and woman ; declaring that this spiritual kinship might be found by delicate tests in this nether world, and that this relation of the sexes to each other extends into the heavenly kingdom. No long time elapsed before Stone and Sheldon were both found putting their doctrine to the proof. In Salina, there lived a married woman of some beauty and much intelligence, named Eliza Porter, who had been an early convert to holiness, and a leading member of the Church. Stone had need to see Eliza very often ; for they led the prayer-meetings and managed the church business in common. Stone found in Eliza a help-meet in the Lord ; and as their hearts melted towards each other, they began to find affinities in their souls which they

had not imagined. All the members of their church perceived and justified the union of these two souls. Sheldon, too, discovered that he had been married by mistake to a stranger spirit, one who would be happier when she got her release from him, and found the original partner of her soul. He found his own second self in Miss Sophia A. Cook, a young unmarried lady living in the lake country.

Lucina Umphreville held that this sort of friendship between male and female saints in these latter days and in the Perfect Church, was not only allowable in itself, but honourable alike for the woman and the man. St. Paul, she said, had his female companion in the Lord; and it was right for Sheldon, Stone, and Rider to have each his female companion in the Lord. The Rev. Jarvis Rider is said to have taken the young lady at her word, and to have pressed his claim for a share in her mystic dreams. True to her creed, the beautiful girl entrusted herself in spiritual wedlock to a man who very soon proved by his acts that he was unworthy to have been trodden beneath her feet; and the state into which she passed through this contract with Rider, she represented to herself and to others as the highest condition ever to be reached on earth.

Two years after the convention of Saints in Manlius, a meeting was called at Canaseraga, also in the burnt district, at which Rider and Lucina Umphreville were present, as the chief male and female preachers. They travelled in company, and held a common testimony as to the Lord's doings in their souls. They spoke of their affinity for each other; describing the state into which they had entered as one of high attainment and lasting peace. In this meeting they professed to have gained a new and nobler ground of religious experience than any which they had previously enjoyed; asserting in their sermons that they had now attained to the state of the resurrection from the dead.

In this meeting, and in other meetings which followed it, Rider and Lucina took the high ground held by the followers of Ann Lee; that of a pure and perfect chastity being the only basis of companionship between man and woman in the Lord. Their strength was spent in a daily protest against what they called the work of the devil in the flesh, and many persons in the burnt district followed them in this war upon the world and the world's ways. Along the shores of Ontario, in a hundred hamlets, in thousands of log-huts, good women

were in sore distress of mind about their duties in what they had been told was a new dispensation. Meetings were held in village inns; ministers were called; religious experiences were compared. A great trouble fell upon the district—a trouble which was felt in every house; the only comfort to many distracted husbands being a strong conviction that the world would shortly pass away.

How long and loyally the Rev. Jarvis Rider and Miss Umphreville kept to the spirit of their union is not clear. Rider was the first to break the bond, which he did in favour of Mrs. Edwards of Bridgeport, on Lake Oneida, a sister in whom he had found a still closer affinity of soul than in Lucina. Then Miss Umphreville, parting from her first spiritual spouse, entered into the same kind of relation with the Rev. Charles Lovett, of New England fame. This preacher was from Massachusetts, and he had come among the New York Perfectionists as a representative of the New England Pauline Church.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND BURNT DISTRICT.

THE second, and stronger branch of the Pauline Church of America, sprang into life in Massachusetts, a hardier province for such a growth than the Lake country of New York.

The movement began in the post township of Brimfield, in the hilly Hampden county, about seventy miles from Boston ; of which place the Rev. Simon Lovett and the Rev. Chauncey Dutton were the revival pastors. In and about Brimfield there happened to be then residing a number of clever, beautiful, and pious women. Clever, beautiful, and pious women are not scarce in New England ; but there chanced to be living at that time in Central Massachusetts an unusual number of those bright and peerless creatures who have power either to save or to wreck men's souls. First among these female agitators stood two sisters, the Misses Annesley, who had come

into this place from Albany, in New York ; bringing with them the doctrine of salvation from sin, together with Lucina Umphreville's theory of a pure and holy life. These ladies had infected many persons, females mostly, with their own ideas. Next came Miss Maria Brown, a young lady of good position and active mind. After her came Miss Abby Brown, her sister, and Miss Flavilla Howard, her friend. But the real mistress and contriver of all the mischief which befell the Saints in Brimfield, was Miss Mary Lincoln, a young and lovely girl, of high connexions, of aspiring spirit, and of boundless daring.

The parents of this young lady were among the highest people in the place. Her father was a physician, a man of science, and of the world. The Saints of course called him an unbeliever, though he had always been a member in the Presbyterian Church. Her mother was pious, and Mary had been trained in the severer truths of her father's faith. The habits of her mind led her to be a seeker after light. When the Misses Annesley came into her neighbourhood, raising their testimony against sin, she went to hear them preach ; and, much against her father's wish, became a member of the Perfect Church ; entering

with her high spirit and dashing courage into every movement connected with the work of grace. She was so pretty, so seductive, so peremptory, in her ways, that people bowed to her will, and let her say and do things which no one else could have said and done. She helped to make piety the fashion. She rebuked the devil in high places. She held out her hand—a very soft hand—to the two preachers, the Rev. Simon Lovett and the Rev. Chauncey Dutton, men who were striving with all their might to snatch perishing souls from hell. Petted by these clergymen, as such a young ally was sure to be, she threw herself heartily into all their schemes. When the cross had to be borne she offered her neck for the burthen. When the world was to be defied, she stood ready to endure its wrath. When a witness was required against shame, she put herself forward for the part. Her father raged and mocked; but she heeded him not. She felt happy in this new liberty of the spirit, under which she could say what came into her head, and do what came into her heart. In short, she seems to have thought that the revival flag had been given into her hands, and that she had been chosen in the new heaven as Bride of the Lamb.

Reports of what Lucina Umphreville was doing in the burnt district of New York had begun to excite the imaginations of these young and clever girls. Was Lucina the only prophetess of God? Could they do nothing to emulate her zeal? Was no door open to them, with their willing hands and devoted hearts? Were they to be dumb and silent in the great day? Could they find no work in the Redeemer's vineyard? Had they no stand to make against that world which lies in eternal enmity against Him? Surely, a way could be found if it were hotly sought. Had not the promise gone forth in the New Jerusalem: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened unto you?"

They had read the story of the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit, which the Rev. James Boyle had recently brought forward as an example for the American Saints; and they yearned to imitate the self-denial of those vigorous old German monks and nuns. They knew the old controversies of the Church on the merit of killing shame, and they desired to find out a way in which to destroy their part of that sad evidence of man's fall. Some of their friends, like Mrs. Alice Tarbell, a married and experienced lady,

of good sense and keen perception, warned them against these promptings of the spirit. Alice was one of the saints who professed to believe in the new doctrines of holiness and freedom; her husband was a pious deacon; but she shunned the more excited class-rooms and love-feasts, and kept her eyes open to the facts of daily life. But the younger women would take no counsel save their own; for they held the wisdom of the wise as dirt, and read their own visions and imaginations as the word of God. They whispered to each other about the duty of bearing the cross of Christ; and they sought with earnest prayer for light as to some plan by which they might prove their hatred of the flesh, their contempt for law, and their devotedness to God. At length, some purposes began to shape themselves in the minds of these young women, which took the world by surprise, and called down upon them its abiding wrath.

Those who could see into this revival camp, unblinded by its passions, were keenly alive to the tendency already visible among its male and female guards to something more than gospel freedom. Friendship in the Lord appeared to have its own set of looks and tones. Much whispering in corners, lonely walks at sundown, and

silent recognitions, were in vogue. The brethren used a peculiar idiom, borrowed from the Song of Songs. A tender glance of the eye, and a silent pressure of the hand, were evidently two among the signs of this freemasonry of souls. All titles were put aside; every man was a brother, every girl was a sister; except in those higher and nearer cases, in which the speaker seemed to have won the right of using a more personal and endearing name. When the tie between a preacher and his convert had become spiritually close, the word brother passed into Simon, the word sister into Mary. Here and there, a more advanced disciple would offer and accept, like the German Mucker, a holy kiss.

Under such circumstances, what more could these young ladies do to defy the world and kill the sense of shame? The leading ministers happened to be away from Brimfield. The Rev. Chauncey Dutton was gone to Albany for counsel with the Saints who had gathered around the Annesley circle; the Rev. Simon Lovett was in New Haven, whither he had gone to consult with John H. Noyes, the wisest and most shining light in the revival host. The Rev. Tertius Strong, a very weak brother, was doing duty in their place.

Noyes was known to have preached a doctrine about the Second Coming, of which the Pauline Church in Brimfield was eager to know more. This man had a high reputation in the schools; for he had been a pupil of Andover and Yale, and was supposed to be deep in the best theological learning of the United States. The views which he taught in public were such as strike the sense, and those which he was said to hold in secret were such as rouse and fascinate the soul. His open testimony was that man must be saved from sin by the power of faith, and by nothing else. The secret science, which he whispered only to the chosen few, had reference to the rule of marriage in the kingdom of God.


In the absence of Lovett and Dutton, Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown put their young heads together and hit upon their plan. They had often told each other they must do something great—something that would strike the world—something that would bring upon them its wrath and scorn. And now was the time to act their part.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AFFAIR AT BRIMFIELD.

WHILE these young women were dreaming of the things they were to suffer for God's glory, their pastor, Simon Lovett, came back from New Haven, bringing with him John H. Noyes, the preacher of that new doctrine of the Second Coming which they were burning to hear. That doctrine was that the Second Coming had taken place—as all the Apostles had taught that it would take place—about forty years after His crucifixion in the flesh. At New Haven, Simon Lovett had fallen in with this view; and, being won to the new faith, he was anxious that Noyes should come over to Massachusetts and preach it to his Brimfield flock.

A stir was made by his coming; for the Rev. Tertius Strong had girt up his loins for battle; putting on what he called his shield and buckler against this teaching of the New Haven school. On the night of Noyes' arrival, a meeting of




the Saints was called; the chapel-room was crowded to the door; when Noyes, standing up, and opening the pages of his New Testament, turned to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, chapter fourth, and read it; saying that it meant no more and no less than the words, in their most literal sense, conveyed. Some of the Saints went with him, and some stood off. The Rev. Tertius Strong, his main opponent, was the first to give way and admit the fact. Lovett had been already won. Most of the young women came into the truth, and the township rang with news of the arrival of this great message, and this bright messenger, to mankind.

The Rev. John H. Noyes, the hero of this movement, saw with alarm the signs of a coming storm. He found that among this group of beautiful women, not a few of the more passionate creatures were falling into a state of frenzy, over which he feared that he could exercise no control. What course was he to take?

The habits of the place were pleasant. A bevy of lovely girls hung on his words, spoke to him in tones of affection, looked to him for that peace which is more precious to the soul than love. Some of them called him brother, some again

ventured to call him John. The leading spirits were bolder still. On the lips of Maria Brown, he was either John, or beloved John; on those of Mary Lincoln he was my brother, my beloved, and my dearly beloved.

The preacher of holiness felt that in the presence of these seductions he was but a man, and liable to fall. These words of love made music in his ear, this pressure of soft hands shot warmth into his veins. In this tender society his soul was hardly safe. Preacher, and hero of the day, he was the centre of all talk, of all action, of all confidence, among these Saints. Every man came to him for counsel. Every woman brought him her experience. Every one sought to touch him in the innermost privacy of his heart. How could he resist that seeking smile, that tender grasp, that chaste salute? Noyes went into his room and locked his door. All night long he watched and prayed. God, as he fancied, came to his help; for in the darkness of midnight, as he lay in his lonely bed, a light was given him to see the danger in which he stood; and, jumping to his feet, he found strength in his limbs to flee from this place of danger while there was yet time to save his soul from sin.



Long before it was yet day, he threw on his clothes, crept out of the house, and found his way across country, without saying one word to any living soul in Brimfield. The month was February ; snow lay thick upon the ground ; and he wished to avoid the main road, from fear lest he should be followed in his flight, and persuaded to turn back. He took a path over hill and dale ; and facing the icy wind, which came from a hundred crests and pools, he pushed forward all day, all night, through the broken country, and across the Connecticut river, until he reached his father's house in Putney, Vermont, after walking through the snow, in twenty-four hours, a distance of sixty miles. His feet were bruised and swollen, but his heart was saved from a snare, his soul from death.

This sudden disappearance of the New Haven preacher only fanned the fire at Brimfield ; and two days after his departure from the town, Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown carried out a scheme, of which, had he remained among them, he would probably have been the hero. They found their way into the Rev. Simon Lovett's room, awoke him from his sleep, and suffered themselves to be taken in the act.

They meant no harm, and, in a word, no harm

was *done*. But the scandal raised about their heads was loud enough to satisfy all their craving for scorn and hate. Who cared to ask about results, when he could fasten on such a fact? Two young and lovely girls, well born, well reared, professing members of a church, had been found at midnight, bent, as it seemed, on mischief, in their pastor's room. That story flew like wind from Brimfield to Boston, from Boston to New York. An old custom, which exists (I believe) in Wales, as well as in parts of Pennsylvania and New England, permits, under the name of "bundling," certain free, but still innocent endearments to pass between lovers who are engaged. Some such endearments were supposed to have passed between the Rev. Simon Lovett and the two young ladies; hence the bundling at Brimfield became a common phrase, as the fact itself was a common topic of conversation in the religious world. Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown had their hearts' desire of public abuse.

Dr. Lincoln, the high and dry physician, was exceedingly wroth with his daughter Mary, whom he charged with bringing dishonour upon his house. Mary could not be made to see it; she said it was her cross; she had done no

wrong ; but her father could not understand her case. Dr. Lincoln carried her to the house of her friend, Mrs. Alice Tarbell, who took her in, and promised to take care of her for a little while. When it was known that Mary had been sent away from home (cast out, as they said, for the sake of Christ) her friends came flocking to her side ; Maria Brown, Abby Brown, Flavilla Howard, and many more ; who began to praise the Lord, to sing, and dance, and kiss each other in a frantic way. Mary told these sisters in the Lord, that her father was possessed by a devil ; and when he came to see and talk with her in Mrs. Tarbell's house, she smote him on the face in order to cast it out. Next day she left her friend Alice, and went to another house, with every symptom of insanity upon her. During that day she announced that the town of Brimfield would be burnt with fire, like the cities of the plain, described in the book of Genesis ; and that all who would save themselves alive must fly with her to the top of a neighbouring hill. Maria Brown would have gone with her friend, but her sister Abby clung to her, and held her back. Mary Lincoln and Flavilla Howard fled alone ; and in their hurry to escape from the fiery hail, they threw off most of their

clothes, and pushed through the thick scrub, the heavy snow, and the dismal swamp, to the hill base. There they paused and prayed, when the Lord (as they afterwards said) hearkened to their voice, withheld the fires, and let the judgment pass.

The poor girls lost their way, and wandered about they knew not where. Deep in the night they came to a farm-house, and begged a shelter from the biting cold. They had thrown away their shoes, and their clothes were torn to rags. Their flesh was all but frozen ; and for many days these hapless heroines lay in the log shanty at the point of death.

CHAPTER V.

CONFESSION OF FATHER NOYES.

AMONG the papers placed in my hands by American divines, is a confession by Father Noyes of his share in this Brimfield revival. Who and what this man is, the world is, perhaps, sufficiently aware :—lawyer, theologian, preacher, sinner, convertite and saint—wanderer, outcast, writer, communist—he has led a life of the most singular moral and religious changes. For thirty-seven years he has lived in the centre of revival passions ; he has an eye quick to observe, a pen prompt to note, the things which come before him. At my request he has put the following confession into ink :—

“ It was in February of 1835, a year after my conversion to holiness at New Haven, and six months after we commenced publishing the *Perfectionist*, that I went up from New Haven through

Massachusetts with Simon Lovett. He had come as a sort of missionary from the New York Perfectionists to convert me to their ideas, and I had converted him to some of mine, especially to the New Haven doctrine of the Second Coming. He took me on this excursion to introduce me among his spiritual friends in Southampton and Brimfield. In both of these places there were groups of Perfectionists who had received their faith from the New York school, through two ladies from Albany, the Misses Annesley. They had begun to take our paper (as indeed the whole New York school had), but had not received our doctrines. I found them prejudiced against our views of the Second Coming and other important teachings of the New Haven school; and I preached what I believed among them with much zeal and some contention. Their leader, Tertius Strong, succumbed to my reasonings, and soon the doctrine of the Second Coming, and what was called the 'Eternal promise,' were received on all sides with great enthusiasm. I left them in the midst of their enthusiasm, and went on my way to Vermont. Lovett remained at Brimfield, and from him, and from letters of Mary Lincoln and others, I afterwards learned the following facts.


“Two days after I left, Chauncey E. Dutton arrived from Albany. The excitement continued and increased. Finally, it turned from doctrines and assumed a social and fanatical form. Several young women, who were really leaders of the whole flock, became partially insane, and began to act strangely. The disorderly doings that were reported to me were, first, the case of ‘bundling ;’ and, second, a wild night-excursion of two young women to a mountain near the village. I had no reason to believe that any act of real licentiousness took place ; but that the ‘bundling’ was performed as a bold self-sacrifice for the purpose of killing shame and defying public opinion. I confess that I sympathised to some extent with the spirit of the first letters that came to me about this affair, and sought to shelter rather than condemn the young women who appealed to me against the storm of scandal which they had brought upon themselves. But in the sequel, as the irregularities continued and passed on into actual licentiousness, I renounced all sympathy with them, and did my best in subsequent years to stamp them out, by word and deed, and succeeded.

“I was so near being actually present at this

affair, and as liable to be thought responsible for it, and implicated in it, that I must now tell more particularly how and why I left Brimfield.

“From my first contact with the Massachusetts clique at Southampton, I had been aware of a seducing tendency to freedom of manners between the sexes. Liberties were in common use which were seemingly innocent, and were certainly pleasant, but which I soon began to suspect as dangerous.

“At Brimfield there was an extraordinary group of pretty and brilliant young women. By my position as preacher I was a sort of centre, and they were evidently in a progressive excitement over which I had no control. I became afraid of them and of myself. At length in my night-studies I got a clear view of the situation, and received what I believed to be ‘orders’ to withdraw. I left the next morning, alone, without making known my intention to any one, taking a ‘bee line’ on foot through snow and cold—below zero—to Putney, sixty miles distant, which I reached within twenty-four hours. Thus I jumped off the train in time to escape the smash; and as I was not either conductor or engineer, I felt no responsibility for it, though I sympathized with



the wounded and did what I could to help them.

“I will add to this narrative three letters from the package I received from Brimfield soon after the catastrophe, to show by specimen the spirit of the affair. The flight to the mountain is described in the following letter :—

MARIA BROWN TO JOHN H. NOYES.

“ ‘ *Brimfield, March, 1835.*

“ ‘ BELOVED JOHN,

“ ‘ I write because Sister Mary Lincoln desires me to relate her Friday evening’s adventure, for she is not able to write. During the afternoon of that day she heard the voice of God warning her to flee—escape for her life, for the judgments of God awaited the place. Her voice changed, and she was filled with power. She waited in Little Rest (a small village in Brimfield), until evening, when another dear sister felt drawn to follow her—Flavilla Howard. Others doubted, thinking her crazy. She left there and came to our house, Sisters Flavilla and Abby with her. Before she got here she was drawn another way, but she wanted me to accompany her. She felt that this

was against the leadings of the Spirit. I was drawn to Sister Mary, but Abby clung to me and wept, saying this would kill her. The dear girls left me and went on, and none of our folks were led to go after them. Some of the Saints were at our house, but all were prevented going after them, for some wise purpose. The night was dark. They went across the meadows through water and mud to escape the pursuers (for the people were in search of her). She felt that the clothes she had with her and those she had on, were a burthen. She laid them all aside. They then escaped to the west mountain, and when there she felt that she received the wrath of God which awaited the people—she suffered for the saints ; but they made the woods ring with their loud hallelujahs to the saint. She then felt willing to return, but knew not which course to take. It rained, and she had nothing on save her dress and thin cape, without shoes. She threw her dress over her head that Sister Flavilla might see, and went over rocks, ploughed ground—each step sinking in the mire—through bush, brooks, and mud-holes, sometimes carrying her sister, and arrived at a house about a mile distant from ours at eleven o'clock, after travelling six miles. She returned home in the morning, and

is now scarcely able to walk. Her friends think her crazy. The Saints have all turned against us, thinking we are led by the devil. They will turn back and begin where they left off when you were here. They pierce Jesus in us, but how long they will do so I know not. I will, and can bear it in silence until the Almighty shuts the mouth of the vile accusers. We hold up the liberty of the kingdom, but they think it of the devil. I am not considered crazy, but vile. It is all right, and I can say *Amen*.

“ ‘*MARIA*.’

“ Mary B. Lincoln, who was really the leader and master-spirit in the Brimfield *émeute*, was a daughter of a respectable physician moving in good society; young, beautiful, and attractive. Her letters show that her spirit was powerful and aspiring enough to have made her either an Ann Lee or a Joan of Arc. You will observe signs, slight in the first letter, more decisive in the second, of the presence of the ‘who-shall-be-greatest’ mania. Mary carried the flag, and thought she was to be the foremost champion of God. Her delusions did not pass away. She chose, and married Chauncey E. Dutton. They

circulated as spiritual leaders in New York and elsewhere for awhile, and finally became flaming Millerites. I had a letter of warning from her, dated March 1843, calling on me to prepare for the end of the world. They both died long ago.

MARY B. LINCOLN TO JOHN H. NOYES.

“ ‘ *The New Jerusalem.*

“ ‘ BELOVED, DEARLY BELOVED,

“ ‘ After bleeding, blistering, and scourging, my strength is almost exhausted. The little that remains I will devote to those who are dearer to me than life. I know you love me and all the dear people here, and to hear from any of us will bless you, and a few lines from me will not be less acceptable for being penned with a trembling hand. I have been very sick. Life has been almost extinct in me a number of times. I am still weak, but strong enough to declare the eternal victory of the spirit that dwelleth within. Though temptations and trials of every kind thicken around me, and my spirit has often been weighed down by the tears and entreaties of those who love me, yet I have not been left to deny the faithfulness of my Father by retracing

a step of the way I have taken. I know in whom I have believed. The everlasting Father has married me to Himself in a covenant that is stronger than death. Satan may rage and attempt to deceive, but his last mask is on. His time is short.

“ ‘ You know not the stir in this place the Lord has made through Sisters Maria, Flavilla, and *me*. The accuser presents himself in every form to us, but he is cast down. Christ gives power through innocency to bind all who *doubt* us, and there are none here who do not doubt. I am blessed with speaking boldly about the work in my own soul. I have no mock humility that will lead me to secrete any of my Father’s kindness to me or any of His dear children. I am not afraid or ashamed to receive the sons of God into my bosom, and love them before the world, pleading for the insulted, injured spirit of our Father in them. It is not enough that we speak for God in Jesus or Brother Paul. The devil would love to have us stop here ; but it is for me to stand by Brothers John, Simon, and Chauncey, and throw my arms round lovely Maria and Flavilla, the sweet angel that forsook all to go with me into the mountain ! Sister Maria has related this trial to you. My Father

led me there to be crucified. I am not ashamed of it, neither does it bow me down. The victory He has given me since exceeds all that I before experienced. I see a great deal of company, testifying almost unceasingly. All are bound before me. Smith, the Universalist of Hartford, called to see me. Had sweet liberty in talking. He is a sweet little sinner, and I very affectionately told him who his father was [*i.e.* the devil]. He thought me a wonder.

“The Saints here wear very long faces. Fear has taken hold of them—the fear to cross the lives of wicked, vile men. I feel that the Lord will lead His children to cross them, and so upset the polluted government of our nation; but if God has ordained otherwise, I shall rejoice. Gladly would I be anything and everything that I might win souls. He has prepared me to stand unawed before assembled millions, to tell the simple story of a dying Saviour’s love, shedding the same tears that our elder Brothers shed over Jerusalem. But if God has declared war we will say *Amen*. Eighteen hundred years ago, God said, “’Tis peace on earth;” but men have dared to throw the lie into the great Jehovah’s face. His long-suffering we adore, and if His justice cuts off the wicked

now, the eternal region shall sing with our hal-lelujahs to it. Amen, Amen.

“ ‘MARY.’

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

“ ‘*Mount Sion, Eternity.*

“ ‘MY BROTHER,

“ ‘Your spirit being the only one in the clay in which mine finds rest, you will not think it strange that I write you so soon again. My soul goes out after some mighty spirit in which it may hide itself awhile from the storm. Through the kindness of our Father, many and mighty are my trials just now. The devil never spited me as he now does, for I see his *art*, and fear not to unmask him. I have seen the man of sin revealed in the Perfectionists, in the building up of the Jewish temple, and most manifest where its adorning is most lovely. Is it not so? Has not God laid it even with the dust, and can aught but Satan rebuild it? Has not God pronounced a woe upon it? And shall not we, His children, say *Amen*? I still try the Saints here. They say that I am taking steps that another has not. I know that my steps in the desert are not in the sand:

and if the Lord leads me in untrodden paths, I shall go praising the God of Israel who is my guide. I feel that He has led me past all but you, for He will not permit me to have fellowship with any other, but strengthens me with communion with the spirits of the air. Yes, my brother, soon God in me will stand in front of the battle. He is mastering my strength by His burning love to war with hell's blackest fury. God has shown me by His wisdom, that by the artlessness of females the armies of the aliens would be put to flight, and the victory won. God has chosen weak things to confound the wise. Through Eve the war began ; through Eves it is continued ; through them it will be closed, and a declaration of Eternal Independence made to the joy of all who sign it. You see "I am for war." God has armed me in a manner that the world thinks does not become a once timid female ; but according to the gift I now receive, I *act*. When it pleases my Father to make me more lovely, I shall be pleased to be so. I feel that His work, through me, will be short and mighty. My spirit is becoming too powerful for its habitation. I stand almost alone here. Many doubt me, and yet God has given me power over all the Saints. I have as much liberty in meeting,

and am as much at home as in my father's kitchen. The last one that I was at, the Lord led me and Sister Maria, and Samuel T. to walk the floor, sing "Woe, woe to Babylon," and talk and laugh as much as we had a mind to. It was a trial to some of them, but they could not help themselves. The Lord gave me perfect power over them all in so doing. I told them I should talk all night, if the Lord led me to. Most of them are following after; God is leading them into the truth, yet they do not know it. Deacon Tarbell is much blessed, Sister Hannah is very sweet, and Sister Maria is very strong and bold.

"‘MARY.’"

"To complete the history of the Brimfield affair, I will add that, besides sending its seeds into New York, it was partially reproduced in New Haven. Lovett and Dutton circulated there; and spiritual mating had its run there, as at Brimfield and elsewhere. Whether there was any bundling I cannot say; I never resided in New Haven, except on occasional visits, after I left with Lovett in 1835. Elizabeth Hawley, who was in the midst of the New Haven intrigues, says in a letter to me, 'Simon Lovett first brought the doctrine of

Spiritual Wifehood among New Haven Perfectionists, after his bundling with Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown at Brimfield. He claimed Abby Fowler (a very estimable young woman of New Haven) as his spiritual wife, and got her. She died not long after of consumption. Simon then married Abby Brown, sister of Maria, at Brimfield. Terens Fowler, brother of Abby, married Miss Tarbell of Brimfield, under the idea that she was his Spiritual Wife.

“JOHN H. NOYES.”

CHAPTER VI.

GOSPEL FREEDOM.

FROM the day on which the New York Saints sought fellowship with their New England friends, the spirit of Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown appears to have passed into the colder children of Lucina Umphreville, and even into that prophetess herself.

Mary Lincoln, on recovering from her sickness, came into the theory of Spiritual husbands and Spiritual wives, as this theory had been taught from Salina by the Rev. Erasmus Stone. She found, however, that the Rev. Chauncey Dutton, not the Rev. Simon Lovett, the hero of her Brimfield scandal, was her natural mate. Hand in hand Mary and Dutton travelled through the country, staying with those who would receive them, preaching to such as would come and hear. They affected to travel as they said St. Paul had travelled with his female comforter. The passions,

which were condemned in all men, were in their own persons crucified and dead. But in the end, these hot reformers of a carnal world came under bonds so far as to be duly married in the church.

Maria Brown went over to New York ; where she sought the friendship and guidance of Lucina Umphreville, and kept herself free from many of the delusions into which her old friends and neighbours fell. The Rev. Jarvis Rider, parting from his Shaker-like bride, found in a married sister, the wife of Thomas Chapman, of Bridgeport, on Oneida Lake, a woman of yet closer spiritual affinities to himself. Mrs. Chapman was a young and pretty woman, who was liked by every one for her charming ways and her kindness of heart. An early convert to holiness, she had always been a pillar of the church, and her house had been open at all times to the Saints. When Maria Brown came on a visit to the Lake district, Mrs. Chapman invited her to stay at Bridgeport; and not only Maria Brown, but Lucina Umphreville, together with the Rev. Jarvis Rider and the Rev. Charles Lovett. Chapman, her legal husband, being engaged in digging the Chenango Canal, was a good deal from home ; but he felt such confidence in his fellow-saints, that he gave them

perfect liberty in his house. Rider took advantage of this confidence to persuade Mrs. Chapman that she was his second self, his natural mate, and his destined bride in the future world. On finding such a pretension raised, Lucina Umphreville not only gave up all her own claims on Rider, but sanctioned, as it seems, the pleas which he had now put forth to a special claim on the soul of Mrs. Chapman. The woman, persuaded by her clerical guests, consented to accept the position of Rider's spiritual wife.

In like manner, the Rev. Charles Lovett proposed a spiritual union with Lucina; when the woman who had been deserted by Rider gave herself away into a second, and a happier heavenly match.

Maria Brown sat by, alone, content to be alone.

When Thomas Chapman came home from his labour on the canal, and heard what had been done in his absence by these Saints, he knocked the Rev. Jarvis Rider down, kicked him black and blue, and thrust him out into the lane. His rage was violent, but its force soon died away. How he became reconciled to the preacher of Spiritual wifehood I cannot pretend to say. Men, who do

not seem to me crazy, tell me that Chapman, when he raised his hand against the revival preacher, was stricken blind; not in a mystical and moral sense of the word, but that he really and completely lost his sight. One man tells me that Chapman went to New York to consult an oculist, and did not recover the use of his eyes for many months. In this affliction he begged the reverend gentleman's pardon, called him back into the house, and threw himself on the floor in agonies of shame for having dared to assert his carnal mind in opposition to the will of God. Still, when his eyes were better, he got rid of his saintly guests, left the place of his shame, and separated from his wife. Rider forgot his affinity for the cast-away wife, and Mrs. Chapman being a woman of delicate constitution, this strife between her husband in the flesh and her partner in the spirit, put an end to her life.

In the meantime, Noyes had been quietly preparing to launch on the world his own theory of Spiritual wifehood. In his sermons he had often hinted his dislike to the present system of legal marriage, and of family life, as not being sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. At length he put the germ of his system into a letter, dated January

15, 1837, and addressed to David Harrison, of Meriden, in Connecticut. A copy of this epistle fell into the hands of Theophilus R. Gates, of Philadelphia, who was then editing *The Battle Axe*; and in this periodical, the letter now known as the Battle Axe Letter, and which claims to be the Magna Charta of Pauline Socialism, first saw the light of day.

THE BATTLE-AXE LETTER.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Though the vision tarry long, wait; it will come. I need not tell you why I have delayed writing so long, and why I am in the same circumstances as when we were together. I thank God that I have the same confidence for you as myself. I have fully discerned the beauty, and drank the spirit, of Habakkuk’s resolution, ‘Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.’ Yea, brother, I *will* rejoice

in the Lord, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. The present winter is doubtless a time of sore tribulation to many. I see the Saints laying off and on like the distressed ships at the entrance of New York harbour, waiting for pilots ; and I would advise them all, if I could, to make a bold push, and 'run in' at all events.


"For one, I have passed the Hook—my soul is moored with an anchor sure and steadfast—the anchor of hope ; and I am willing to do what I can as a pilot to others : yea, I will lay down my life for the brethren.

"As necessity is the mother of invention, so it is the mother of faith. I therefore rejoice in the necessity which will ere long work full confidence in God, such confidence as will permit Him to save His people in a way they have not known ! In the meantime my faith is growing exceedingly. I know that the things of which we communed at New Haven will be accomplished. Of the times and seasons I know nothing. During my residence at Newark my heart and mind were greatly enlarged. I had full leisure to investigate the prophecies, and came to many conclusions of like importance to those which interested us at New Haven. The substance of

all is, that God is about to set a throne on His footstool, and heaven and earth, *i.e.* all spiritual and political dynasties, will flee away from the face of Him that shall sit thereon. The righteous will be separated from the wicked by the opening of the books and the testimony of the saints. 'The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble. . . . *Saviours* shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau ; and the kingdom shall be the *Lord's*.'—Obadiah, 18, 21. Between this present time and the establishment of God's kingdom over the earth, lies a chaos of confusion, tribulation, woe, etc., such as must attend the destruction of the *fashion of this world*, and the introduction of the will of God as it is done in heaven.

"For the present, a long race and a hard warfare is before the saints, *i.e.* an opportunity and demand for faith—one of the most precious commodities of heaven. Only let us lay fast hold of the hope of our calling ; let us set the Lord and His glory always before our face, and we shall not be moved. I thank God that you have fully known my manner of life, faith, purpose, afflictions, etc., to the end that you may rest in

the day of trouble ; for I say to you before God, that though I be weak in Christ I know I shall live by the power of God toward you and all saints. I am holden up by the strength that is needed to sustain not my weight only, but the weight of all who shall come after me. I will write all that is in my heart on one delicate subject, and you may judge for yourself whether it is expedient to show this letter to others. When the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, there will be no marriage. The marriage-supper of the Lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarrelling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be ; and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. God has placed a wall of partition between the male and female during the apostasy for good reasons, which will be broken down in the resurrection for equally good reasons ; but woe to him who abolishes the law of apostasy before he stands



in the holiness of the resurrection. The guests of the marriage supper may have each his favourite dish, each a dish of his own procuring, and that without the jealousy of exclusiveness. I call a certain woman my wife ; she is yours ; she is Christ's ; and in Him she is the bride of all saints. She is dear in the hands of a stranger, and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end. Write, if you wish to hear from me.

“Yours in the Lord.”

The publication of this document made a noise in the Church hardly less loud than the Brimfield affair had made in the world : the fruits of it are found at Wallingford and Oneida Creek.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PAULINE CHURCH.

ALL these members of the Pauline Church, and nearly all these advocates of Spiritual wifehood, pretend to find some sanction for their doctrine in the teaching and the practice of St. Paul. They say St. Paul had felt that mystic companionship of male and female in the Lord which Lucina Umphreville made known to the Saints of New York, which Father Noyes has carried out in his Bible Families at Wallingford and Oneida Creek, and which Warren Chace describes as the only bond uniting a spiritual husband to a spiritual wife.

Paul, it is commonly said, was not a married man ; not married, that is, in the carnal sense before the law ; yet he would seem, from his own epistle to the saints at Corinth, to have been accompanied on his journey by a woman who was a daily helper in his work. In terms which no one has yet been able to explain away, and which,

since all our churches are drawing more and more upon the Pauline writings, they hold that men should try to understand, St. Paul affirmed his right to the fellowship of this female partner against those cynics and scorners in the infant church who made his personal conduct matter of reproach. What was this woman's relation to St. Paul? Was she his wife? Was she one who stood to him in the place of a wife? Was she as a sister only? The Greek word (1 Cor. ix. 5) by which the apostle names her—*gynaika*—means either wife or woman, like the French word *femme*, and the German word *frau*. From the earliest times in which critics wrote, men have been divided in opinion as to the sense in which the term *adelphē gynaika* was used by Paul. Clement of Alexandria seems to have assumed that Paul would not have taken a female companion with him on his travels unless she had been his wife. Tertullian, on the other side, asserts that the woman who went about with him was not his wife, but a holy sister, who travelled with him from place to place, doing just that kind of work in the early Church which only a woman can effect. Which is the truth?

All critics conclude, for the text is plain so far, that Paul and Barnabas claimed the privilege of

keeping the company of certain holy women, with whom they appear to have lodged and lived. That the connexion between these men and women was, in their own belief, free from blame, no one will doubt ; but the facts which must have placed this connexion beyond the reach of honest, open censure, are not so clear. One word from Paul to the effect that the parties were married would have silenced every tongue ; but Paul did not speak, and did not write that word. What, then, are we to infer from his silence ? The loud voice of antiquity asserts that Paul was a single man. Paul himself tells us that he was accompanied, and had a right to be accompanied, by a female friend. What then ?

The early Fathers of the Church had to meet a question which most of our writers on St. Paul have agreed to shirk. Hilary and Theophylactus, writing in distant countries and distant periods, describe the two apostles, Paul and Barnabas, as being attended by rich women, whom they had converted, and whose duty it was to cook for them and comfort them, as well as to carry the gospel light into the harems of princes and wealthy persons. This view, I think, is that adopted by the Church. Clement himself, though he says these

women were married to the Apostles, seems to think that they went about with their apostolic husbands, not as wives in the flesh, but as sisters in the spirit. Thus we are driven back upon the text, which tells us little, and on the biographers of Paul, who tell us less.

Our usual renderings of the Greek term, by which St. Paul denotes this partner of his toils, extend the meaning so as to make him describe the connexion as chaste and holy. Thus, the Latin Vulgate makes St. Paul speak of his partner as *mulierem sororem*, a form which has been copied with only slight variations into many tongues. The Italian version gives it as *donna sorella*; the Brussels version reads, *une femme qui soit notre sœur (en) Jesus Christ*; the French Protestant version, *une femme d'entre nos sœurs*; the Spanish version, *una muger hermana*; the Portuguese, *huma mulher irmã*. Luther renders the word by *eine Schwester zum weibe*. Our English versions lean to the same conclusion. Wycliffe translates *gynaika* "a womman, a sister;" Tyndal, "a sister to wife;" the Genevans, "a wife being a sister;" and the authorized translators, "a sister, a wife." But this has not been always done. Some of the earliest and some of the latest writers on St. Paul

have taken the other sense ; reading the Greek text as they would have read any other, by plain and open rules. Clement of Alexandria classes Paul with Peter and Philip as the three married apostles ; Conybeare translates *adelphēn gynaike* into " a believing wife," and Stanley into " a Christian woman as a wife."

The Pauline churches of Massachusetts and New York have found an easy way through what has proved so hard a path to scholars in Europe and Asia. They pretend that St. Paul lived with the woman who travelled with him in grace, and not in law ; in a word, that he was to her a spiritual husband, that she was to him a spiritual wife.

Is it not strange that a thousand and one writers on the life of St. Paul should have shirked this deeply interesting question of his relation to his female companion ? Yet this is the singular fact. Conybeare and Howson have not a word to say about it ; Whitby has an unmeaning note, in which he says that either Paul had a wife, or Barnabas had a wife, or one of these Apostles might have had a wife, since no law forbade him to marry if he had so pleased. The writers in Smith's Bible Dictionary, and in Kitto's Encyclopædia of Biblical Literature, are equally reserved. Is this

strange silence wise? What is to be gained for the Church by clouding this central fact in the great Apostle's life?


The Saints of New York find the same sort of Spiritual love between men and women in the Agapæ, those Feasts of Love which are so frequently mentioned both by friends and enemies of the early Church.

Hardly any subject connected with the planting of Christianity is obscured by darker clouds than the origin and history of the Agapæ; yet enough, they urge, is known to prove that the Feasts of Love were the results of a new sympathy having been introduced by the Church into the relations of sex and sex.

They say the social order founded in Judea was, in part at least, communistic; the religious order being made to complete, and perhaps to supersede, that old political and domestic order which admitted of private property and personal wives. Life in the Church was offered for acceptance as a higher form of spiritual perfectness than life in the family; a proposition which, being assumed and granted, it is easy to urge that the terms brother and sister in the faith expressed a nobler relation than those of husband and wife.

It is safe to say that no such doctrines can be found in either the Sermon on the Mount or any other teaching of our Lord, except so far as the commands to love one another, to give alms to the poor, to speak well of all men, to prefer the gifts of heaven to those of earth, and to bear all things for the meek and lowly, can be made to look like communism. These Pauline churches urge, that it is clear, from the doctrine taught by the Apostles after Pentecost, that these young reformers thought good to abolish private property in favour of the church, and that for a while, in a narrow zone, they met with some success. "The earth," they said, "is the Lord's." In the old times man had held his property in trust, but the trust was ended, since the Lord had come in person to possess His own. All monies were to become as the sacred shekel, which men could no longer use for their private need.

Most of these young reformers of family life had been pupils of the Essenes before they became believers in our Lord ; of those Essenes who had dwelt in ravines of the wilderness, in dry and desert places, among the limestone rocks above Jericho and Engedi ; and who not only held strange doctrines as to love and marriage, but taught



that all the children of God should feed from the same store, and have all their goods in common. John the Baptist had lived among these Essenes and learned their doctrine. Peter, John, and Andrew, young men from Capernaum, who became founders of Jewish Christianity, had been the Baptist's hearers. An Essenic spirit displayed itself in every act of the infant Church ; the Apostles taking that counsel of our Lord to a rich man tempted by his wealth, " If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," as a rule for all. In their eyes, private wealth was not only a snare to the soul,—such as love, rank, beauty, power, health, in fact any earthly good, might become, in its abuse—but a thing stolen from God, and consequently accursed in itself, and incompatible with a holy life. Therefore, say the brethren of Mount Lebanon, and the Bible families of Oneida Creek, the Apostles put it down. Did they also meddle with the relations of man and wife ? The American saints say boldly, yes ; they introduced, in their Agapæ, that spiritual wedlock which is now being revived in the Christian Church.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AGAPÆ.

WHAT were those Agapæ? Were they, as the heathen said, but a new form of idolatry, a faint image of the banquets held by the Greeks in honour of their gods?

We hear that they were social gatherings of the faithful, who met either in each other's houses, when they were rich, or in such chapels and synagogues as they could then command. We know that they were attended by men and women, and that the male and female saints had the privilege of saluting each other with a holy kiss. We know that these meetings were festive; that they were enlivened by singing and playing; that they were called indifferently Feasts of Love and Feasts of Charity; and that they bore in their outward form only too close a resemblance to some of those Pagan rites, of no decent origin, in which many of the converts had been trained.

The song, the feast, and the fraternal kiss, lent ready hints for a Pagan sneer ; and the Agapæ were ridiculed by philosophers and cynics, long before the day arrived for their suppression by an outraged Church.

Of course, in judging the Agapæ it is not right that we should follow the many accusations of their Gentile foes. If much was said against them by heathen writers, much was offered in their defence by the Greek Fathers. Tertullian, Felix, Origen, stood by them, first and last ; champions of whom any cause might well be proud. Yet, the main facts on record about them remain. They fell away from their purity ; they took a Pagan taint ; the fraternal kiss became carnal ; in speech, if not in conduct, they incurred the suspicion of licentiousness ; and the Church, though she covered them against assaults from without, had in the long run to put them down, in order to preserve her own good name.

What was the cause, what the occasion, of this suppression by the Church of a feast which many persons connected very closely with the Last Supper ?

At first, there can be no doubt that these

Agapæ were free from offence. It is true that they had been conceived in a communistic spirit; that they sought to place the life of a believer above the life of a non-believer; and to absorb the sentiment of home in the sentiment of the Church. The gathering of the faithful was to supersede the gathering of the tribe. Dinner was to rise into a sacrament; and the feast of the brethren was to take the place previously occupied by the family meal. Brethren and sisters in the Lord were to meet in either the guest-room of the house or in the aisle of the church; they were to spread out the meats and drinks which they had brought with them; they were to sing a hymn of praise and joy together; they were then to call in the poor, the lame, and the old; they were to sit down at table, rich and poor, healthy and sick, together; they were to tell each other of the Lord's doings in their own souls; they were to call for lamps when the night came down; they were to wash hands, and to kiss each other, male and female, with a holy kiss. The feast was to begin with psalms and end with prayer. "This Love-feast," said Tertullian, "is a support of love, a solace of purity, a check on riches, a discipline of weakness." In

the early days of our religion, this praise was undoubtedly well acquired; for the Agapæ did some good that could hardly have been achieved by any other means. They made men act like brethren. They brought a spirit of practical friendship into the new society; and set a permanent pattern of equality in the presence of God. What more they did, of a kind which the Church could not finally indorse, is matter of suspicion only. It would seem to have been understood that the brethren and sisters in these Agapæ were bound together by a closer tie than that which had previously linked the members of an ordinary Jewish and Pagan household; though the new bond of union was probably recognised in a mystical rather than in a carnal sense.

These feasts were held on three occasions, if not on more,—the celebration of a marriage, the solemnity of a funeral, the anniversary of a martyrdom. In the first and second cases, they were given in private homes; in the third case, either in the church, or in the precincts of a church. The first was gay, the second serious, the third both. In all there were eating, drinking, singing, kissing. In the Love-feasts kept in

honour of the martyrs, a peculiar sentiment was developed ; for all the Saints who took part in them were mystically supposed to become of one kindred in the Lord ; brothers and sisters, standing towards each other in closer relation than those of ordinary husbands and wives.

Soon, too soon, these meetings fell into abuse. The holy kiss became a cover for unholy thoughts, and the feast in which every one was to break bread with his fellow, declined into a licentious orgy. In vain the Church essayed to stem the liberty of fraternal kissing, and to crush the excesses in meat and wine. An old rule, preserved for us in Athenagoras, laid it down, that if any convert should kiss a woman a second time, because he found it pleasant, the act was sin. The chaste salutation, it was said, should be given with the greatest care ; for if any impure thought was in the heart, while the lips were pressed, the kiss became adultery, and put the soul in peril of eternal fires. Athenagoras quotes this rule together with the gloss upon it from Holy Writ, in which they are not to be found. Perhaps they figured in some lost writing, which the Greek Church desired to impose on the people as of equal authority with Holy Writ. The rule itself implies a change of

manners, and its citation in a formal defence of Christian practice, hints the general suspicion in which the Agapæ had then come to be held, at least in Greece.

How, indeed, could these Feasts of Love escape suspicion, when men who had been worshippers of Baal and Aphrodite came into union with the saints? In the temples of Corinth and Antioch, these men and women had been familiar from their youth with seductive and immoral rites; the old leaven seems to have forced itself into the new societies; and even while the Apostles yet lived, those evils had begun to appear, which at a later period compelled the reforming leaders to prohibit the celebration of Love-feasts in the Church. St. Paul complained to his friends of Corinth, that in these Agapæ they gorge and drink, while they neglect to invite the poor. One sees from his anger, that in Greece the converts kept to their habit of indulging in the old Sophist's supper, on pretence of holding the Love-feast of a new dispensation. St. Peter and St. Jude, as well as St. Paul, proclaimed the abuses to which the Agapæ had already given rise in their day.

But the abuse of a dear privilege, say the American Saints, does not imply its abandonment

for ever. If the Feast of Love were good in the Apostolic times, it must be so in every age which shall resemble the Apostolic times. God loves and rewards His children according to the measure of their virtue. That which is wrong in a state of nature may be perfectly right in a state of grace.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPERIENCE OF TWO ELDERS.

A RAGE for special and unlawful friendships between the male and female saints had been long familiar to sage American pastors, as one of the bad growths to be expected in the revival field. I shall cite two little histories of this passion.

The first story is that of Elder Moore.

Elder Moore, of Spring Street Church, in New York city, a shining light among the Presbyterian flock, in speaking of his religious trials to George Cragin, of the New York Moral Reform Society, described the effect of his ghostly wrestlings with repentant sinners on his own affections. One of Moore's penitents was a young lady named Miss Harding, the daughter of rich and worldly people, who had brought her up to the enjoyment of music, dancing, comedies, dinners, dress, and horses. On these passing vanities her mind was fixed, to the grievous peril of her immortal soul.

By chance she became a visitor in his class ; her manner pleased him ; and he felt his heart yearn softly towards the rich and lovely girl. At the close of his exercises she was deeply moved ; she seemed to be asking in her silence for a little help. Taking her hand in his, Moore said to her : " If you go on, I will help you in my prayers." From that moment she had a place in his thoughts, from which she could not be driven away. Her name was on his lips when he rose, and when he lay down. A tender bond grew up between them, for when he strove with God on her behalf, a feeling sprang into his heart akin to that which he felt a man must have for a sister, for a spouse. Being a single man, Moore led in the great city a lonely and gloomy life. Cragin met him one day in the street, and seeing him radiant with unusual joy, accosted him. " She has triumphed ! " said the elder. " Have you seen her, then ? " asked Cragin, who thought his friend unlikely to have ventured to her house. " No," said Moore. " Heard from her ? " " Not one word," he answered with a smile ; " but I am sure that what I say is true." That night a meeting was held for prayer in Spring Street Church, to which Miss Harding came, and told him the story of her call. As she

dwelt on the struggles in her soul—through which she had passed to victory, Cragin smiled ; her tale was a perfect copy of what he had been told in the street by Moore. For the moment these two persons had been drawn together so close, that they seemed to have but one nervous system.

Moore professed to have had many such passages of the Spirit ; this dark and celibate man, unlovely in his person and his life, enjoying a glorious sense of celestial bridals with a host of fair and penitent women. One day, a peculiar feeling came upon him, for which nothing, either in the circumstances or in his state of mind, could fairly account. The Lord's Supper was being observed in Spring Street Church, and as one of the elders he was engaged in distributing the bread and wine. More than the usual crowd were present, for several young men and women, newly brought in, were to take their first sacrament that day. As he moved about the church, he became conscious of a singular swelling in his heart. His pulse beat quicker, his eyes opened wider. All through the morning he had been happy in his work, and blessed with a delicious sense of peace. Why was he now disturbed with so strange a joy ? He longed to embrace the brethren ; to

throw himself into the sisters' arms. He felt a strange love for the young girls who were kneeling at his feet, and taking from his fingers the bread and wine. This love, he knew, was like the love which he felt for his heavenly Father. It sprang from the earth, but it knew no taint of sin. He felt that, in a mystical way, every one of these fair penitents was to him, in that moment, as a sister and a spouse.

That day's experience of the Lord's Supper set the elder thinking on the love which is symbolised by bread and wine, and wondering whether a time would ever come when these symbols would be replaced by another type.

The second story is that of the Rev. John B. Foot.

Foot, a young man of high promise, had been for some time a student of William's College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, when the fierce revival of 1832 broke out; and Dr. Griffin, a preacher of extraordinary force, who came to labour among the college pupils, had set his heart on fire. Foot was converted to a sense of his lost condition. Eight or ten of his companions answered, like himself, to the preacher's call; they met for prayer in their own rooms; they

held forth in public ; they quitted the college, without waiting to complete their course ; they began to travel about the country, calling on the people to flee from the wrath to come. Gifted with powers of speech, Foot became a shining light in the city street, and in the forest camp ; few of the young revival preachers having more to say, or knowing better how to fire the souls of shepherds and woodmen. On the wild skirts of Ohio, among the rude squatters in the backwood, he made for himself a name of note. Growing in grace as he grew in years, he became a convert to Hiram Sheldon's doctrine of salvation from sin, and to the social theory which seems to have been connected in every man's mind with that doctrine of the final establishment of heaven on earth. The Rev. Charles Mead, his friend and fellow-preacher, went along with him in his course ; rousing the rough squatters into fervour, and calling down the blessings of all good men upon their work.

Six years after this conversion to holiness, the two reverend gentlemen, Foot and Mead, being out in what was then the Far West, paid a visit to Foot's married sister, a woman who was working with them in the spirit. Mead and this

lady soon discovered that they were spiritual pairs, mated to each other from the beginning of time ; a secret which they revealed to Foot and to the lady's husband ; both of whom fell on their knees and prayed for light in this new peril which had come upon their faith. The cup was very bitter, the rod was very sharp, the goad was very strong. But what is man that he should turn against the goads ? Heaven's will must be done on earth ; and the only question mooted in this pious household was, whether this thing which had been made known to them was the work of Heaven. After much and sore contention of the spirit, both Foot and the husband thought they saw their way. Death is the term of legal wedlock. In the resurrection there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. And had not the end of all legality arrived ? Were not the Rev. Charles Mead, the woman, and her husband, saints who had entered on the heavenly life ? To them, were not the world and its rules as things of the past ? The reign of sin was over ; and with the reign of sin had gone all contracts made in the name of life and death. What death could do for them was done ; and every contract which death could break was already broken and annulled.

On this view of the matter, they agreed to let the woman and her spiritual lover have their way.

But the squatters and teamsters living out West, not having been saved from sin and born to a new life, felt bound to resent this arrangement in their neighbour's house; and when a child was born of this spiritual pairing, they seized their axes and firelocks, broke into the log shanty, collared the three male saints, stript them to the skin, smeared them with tar, rolled them up in feathers, and set them on a rail.

This matter came before a court of law, in which Mead defended himself in person; but the judge agreed with the mob that a great offence had been committed by the reverend gentleman against public morals. Mead was cast in damages, and sent to gaol.

Foot held fast to his view that in this sad affair he had done no more than his duty, since he felt sure that Mead, in living with his sister in all the freedom of bride and groom, was carrying into effect the holiest ordinance of God. This was what he said to his religious friends. Of course, the transaction made some

noise in the revival camps ; perhaps, in the end, it weakened Foot's power as a preacher ; but for a long time after Mead's trial and imprisonment, this reverend gentleman was well known as a leader in the conventicles of Massachusetts and New York.

CHAPTER X.

WORDEN'S CONFESSION.

MARQUIS L. WORDEN, a staid and sober person, fifty-five years old, is a married man, and the father of a family. I made his acquaintance in New York State. He was a farmer of good standing, and of fair education for his class. He lived in the first burnt district; and his religious trials, which, up to a certain point in his life, were those of many thousands of his countrymen (a fact to give them value in the eyes of all social students), are told in the following paper, which he drew up for me at my request :

"New York, Dec. 15, 1866.

"In undertaking to give you my recollections of Spiritual wifehood, I must necessarily relate more or less of personal history and experience; and at best I may not be able to throw much light on a

subject wrapped, as I think this is, in the mystery of religious enthusiasm.

"It is common with religious sects, and especially with individuals of the highest spiritual attainments, in times of fervent zeal, to think of God and Providence as arranging their future in reference to social companionship. They have come into the presence of God and the powers above, and therefore recognise a higher law over their impulses and passions, and offer their hearts to its guidance rather than to the law of human ordinances. Thus it can be seen how wives might be claimed under the prerogatives of the Spirit.

"I was born in 1813, at Manlius, Onondaga County, New York. It was about the time I was twenty-one (1834) that I was baptized by immersion, and taken into full communion with the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the last days of the same year, I became a convert to Methodist Perfectionism. So I consider this as a sort of pivotal period from which I look backward and forward in my history. To me the year 1834 was throughout a year of earnestness, devotion, and religious activity. Revivals prevailed in the neighbourhoods and region round about Manlius, and through the country in which the

New Measure Evangelists, such as Luther Meyrick, Horatio Foot, and James Boyle, led the way, and it was my pleasure to unite in zeal and effort with them, under the Union religious sentiments which were popular at the time. I did not know anything of Perfectionism until the fall of 1834, although the Sheldons and others in Delphi, but fifteen miles distant, had been testifying to salvation from sin for a year or more. Martin P. Sweet and Jarvis Rider of De Ruyter village, near Delphi, became Perfectionists under the Sheldons' preaching, and travelled together as apostles, preaching from place to place, or, as they called it, bearing witness to salvation from sin. They went to Syracuse, to Owego, and finally came to Manlius' Centre, where the Cook and Mabie families, who had been agitated by revivals during the summer, received them and were converted. By and by I came in contact with them, and received one or more of the first numbers of the *Perfectionist*, then recently published in New Haven. The perusal of these papers, together with the testimony of these persons, led me to desire, through new convictions and aspirations, an experience both deeper and higher than I had attained, and it was joyfully

realised at about the close of the year. I had a calm trust in God and grateful sense of deliverance; had no disorderly intentions; and supposed I was still a Unionist or Methodist; but the people who were called by these names did not receive my testimony, and their coldness sent me to the genial warmth of Perfectionists, with whom I henceforth affiliated.

“I can conscientiously say that those early manifestations of New York piety were characterised by earnestness, zeal, and power; and that the influence of individuals by their faith and daily life was convincing to their neighbours that they held a holier faith, and lived better lives, than common men. They believed in salvation from sin; that ‘whosoever is born of God doth not sin, and cannot sin because he is born of God,’ and has no disposition to sin; that ‘whosoever sinneth is of the devil.’ They believed that they were led by the Spirit. They rejoiced in deliverance from what they called Babylonish captivity, or the legality of the churches, and no doubt this sentiment finally affected their feelings and practice in various ways, and especially was applied to domestic and social relations. Here we come to the beginning of the Spiritual-wife theory.

“There was in Delphi an early believer, Lucina Umphreville by name,—a young woman of fair appearance, good ability, and of prepossessing manners, who seemed to set herself up as a sort of Ann Lee, the advocate of spiritual love, in opposition to carnal love, Lucina rejected marriage.

“I came under this anti-marriage theory and influence, and have reason to believe it was common throughout my acquaintance. But during its prevalence, the idea of special companionship of the male with some particular female existed in a silent, undemonstrative way, and found expression occasionally. I remember the impression I was under, from what I heard in some quarters, that this lady champion of no-marriage and no-intercourse herself was at one time considered the better half in spiritual union with Jarvis Rider, because ‘the man was not without the woman in the Lord.’

“This spiritual union too, so far as I recollect my impressions, was conceded to be a state of high attainment, for Lucina always quoted the text, ‘They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world do not marry, but are as the angels of God.’ So the relation was considered sacred, pure, and spiritual.

“In the spring of 1836, Maria Brown, of Brimfield notoriety, came to Manlius Centre. At that period some changes had come over these peculiar theories and relations of the brethren and sisters. Jarvis Rider had become much attached to a married woman, a sister whom we all very much appreciated and loved for her beauty of character and goodness of heart. At the same time, Miss Anti-Marriage (Lucina Umphreville) was appropriated by Charles Lovett in the same sense as Brother Rider had previously held her. Meanwhile the married sister's husband became disturbed and anxious, and in a fit of mad jealousy took his horsewhip, and applied it furiously to Brother Rider's back, and sent him in haste out of doors. But afterwards, through compunction of conscience and other influences, this furious brother repented, and restored Brother Rider to his family and confidence, with confessions, regrets, and humiliations, and the course of love ran smooth again. But in the sequel there was some reason to believe that the relation became so far carnal as to lay just foundations for scandal.

“I do not know that the Spiritual-wife theory was organised and put in operation by these or

any other similar transactions before and after them, but that phraseology was used to some extent among us. My impression is that its origin might be traced to reports and scandals coming in from Palmyra, Wagnelo, N.Y., where Joe Smith, since about 1829, had been developing Mormonism. I notice in the *History of the Mormons* that mention is made of Smith's inducing several women to cohabit with him whom he called Spiritual Wives. The time is given as 1838, and it was not until 1842 that he received his revelation authorising polygamy. But I have the impression that there were in circulation stories about his Spiritual Wives long before that date.

“Whether there was anything of account, in theory or practice, beyond such incidents as I have mentioned, to indicate the inauguration of Spiritual Wifehood in central New York, I cannot say ; but I judge that some theory of the kind did exist in fact in the minds and hearts of the revival body as a whole. My impression is that Erasmus Stone acted more or less on such ideas in his relations with Eliza Porter. And Hiram Sheldon had a time of seeing in Sophia A. Cooke what he failed to

appreciate in his own wife. There was quite a general expectation that the resurrection was soon coming to reorganise society, and provide personal companionship of male and female without regard to law or other marriage institutions. But as to carnal love, it was in many minds a pollution, not to be tolerated, but to be crucified with the carnal mind, which is not 'subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.'

"Years passed on. The weakness of some was manifest in their being overcome by the passions which they had condemned, and declared crucified and *dead*; in others by the surrender to the marriage relation, and I began to wonder what the end would be. Finally, my own attachment concentrated on a young lady who stood, in heart, firmly on the theory of no marriage. Purity and community with the angels was her motto. But I pushed in the direction of actual marriage. Formidable were the obstructions; among others, I found that Brother Charles Lovett had intimated that my chosen one was his affianced bride in the heavens. I waited yet awhile. But in the year 1839, on the 4th of March, I was married.

"MARQUIS L. WORDEN."



All that is said in this confession by way of fact, known to the writer, is no doubt true. It is only when Worden comes to hearsay and fancy that he goes wrong. His "impression" that the theory of Spiritual Wives may have come from the Mormons of Palmyra, has no foundation to rest on.

The story of Mary Cragin's Spiritual trials, which gives us a deeper insight into the working of these morbid passions, may now be told.


CHAPTER XI.

STORY OF TWO LIVES.

MARY CRAGIN was one of the chief of many female brands who had been plucked from the burning fires during the Great Revival. The story of her life is here told mainly in the words of her husband George.

In its broad features, this story of two lives is that of an idolater and his idol ; of a singularly warm and steadfast human passion, in conflict with an equally warm and steadfast spiritual passion. The idolater was George Cragin ; the idol was his wife Mary.

From every one who knew her, I hear that in her younger days Mary was extremely beautiful ; but her rare beauty of face and figure seems to have been counted as the least among her many attractions. She had the soft eye which seeks, and the ready smile which wins, the beholder's heart. She was a good musician, a ready talker, a delightful nurse. Every man



who came near her fell beneath her sway. Without seeming effort on her side, she became the soul of every society into which she entered ; and from her native force of brain and will she could not help becoming a leader of men and women in both the family and the church. Her story is worth telling at some length.

George Cragin, her husband by the law, was born in 1808, at Douglas, a village some fifty miles from Boston. He was of Scottish descent ; but his foregoers had been settled in Massachusetts since the days of the Mayflower. His father and mother, Puritans of the hardest type, had brought up their son in the belief that to drink wine, to smoke pipes, to dance, to drive a sleigh, to read novels, to see plays, to miss divine service, and go to a revival church, were each and all deadly sins. Cragin the elder was a dark, stern, silent man ; staid in manner, prompt in counsel, active in business ; who, as he seemed to be doing well in the world, was allowed to take a high part in the local politics, and to represent the city of Douglas in the legislature of his state. He was poor in health ; his business adventures failed ; and his family was beggared at one blow. Father and son left Douglas ; and at

nineteen years of age George Cragin found himself thrown upon the world for bread.

At this age, George was hardly more than a child. Twice he had made himself tipsy with tobacco, and once with lemon-punch. Twice he had fallen in love; once when he was ten years old, with a lady of the same age, but of unknown name; once again, when he was fifteen, with a poor Methodist girl, named Rebecca, whom his father would not suffer him to court. This second love affair had brought much trouble on his parents; who, being members of the Congregational church, held Methodist girls, especially Methodist girls who were poor, in high contempt. This love, though hot in the lad of fifteen, could hardly live in a parent's ire. George gave way, and Rebecca went to the well.

George was now sent to school, where a female pupil is said to have died for love of him. Then he was placed behind a counter in Boston, from which point of disadvantage he first saw something of fallen women; afterwards, in the way of business, he got to New York, where he was converted by a revival preacher, the Rev. Charles G. Finney, a great light among the Free Church and New Measure people. In New York he fell into mild

flirtations with Sarah Steele, a co-disciple in the Lord. But this New York Sarah, though she took his arm on her way to meeting, and seemed in her quiet mood to enjoy his talk, would not suffer the young man from Massachusetts to kiss her lips. Once, when he threw his arm about her neck and tried it on, she flashed out upon him with a "Why, George!" that went into his flesh like a knife. Sarah was proud to have the young Puritan for an escort when she went to hear the Rev. Charles G. Finney denounce the world and the devil; but her heart was dead to such warm love as glowed in George's heart, and on his offer of a soft salute, her quick reproof of his folly sent him whirling off into infinite space; from which, let the lady do what she liked, he could never find his way back.

After this rebuff from Sarah, he fell more eagerly than ever into a course of stern, unbating exercise of the spirit. With a clerk of like mind, in the same trading house, he agreed upon a plan for prayer. These lads met in the office, of which they kept the keys, at five o'clock every morning; they prayed together until six, when they walked out to their chapel; there they prayed until seven; after which they went back to the counting-house

and began the business of the world. In their long walks they repeated snatches of psalms and hymns. In their moments of leisure they lisped a form of prayer. After work was done in the store, they returned to chapel for service, and after service in the chapel they retired to their room for private devotion. Every hour of Sunday was absorbed by church and school. On that day they held Bible classes for young men and young women, most of all for young women ; many of whom they wrought upon, by word or tone, to confess their sins.

It was in this strict school of duty and observance that George Cragin encountered the young lady who was to become his wife.

High among the old families of Puritan descent who had found a home in Maine, were the Johnsons and Gorhams of Portland. Like all the best families in New England, these Johnsons and Gorhams were engaged in farming and trading ; but they ranked with the gentry ; they put their girls into good schools ; they sent their boys to college ; and they held their heads rather high among the intellectual classes. Daniel, one of the Johnson young men, had proposed to Mary, one of the Gorham ladies ; he had been accepted as

a suitor ; and, after his equal and happy marriage, he had become the father of two children, a boy and a girl. This pair of Puritans, Daniel and Mary Johnson of Portland, were Presbyterians of the strictest rite ; members of the Rev. Edward Payson's church ; and their infant children, called by their parents' names, Daniel and Mary, were baptized into the new life by that eminent divine. In due time, Daniel E. Johnson, the boy, went to Yale College, where he took high honours, studied theology, and became an ornament of the Presbyterian Church. Mary, the girl, was born in 1810 ; and her course of life was to run on a wholly different line.

From an early age she showed unusual signs of quickness and sympathy. Very pretty, very bright, very amiable, everybody liked her and everybody petted her. To her father and her brother, she was a sort of idol ; so that, even when she was yet a little child, they never tired of reading with her and working for her. Placed in a good school when she was five years old ; kept at close drill until she was fifteen ; helped at home by a clever father ; spurred along by the correspondence of an advancing brother ; where is the marvel that Mary's teachers should

have at last declared that they could teach her no more ; and that the time had come when she might be entrusted to teach in turn ?

Johnson, her father, who was engaged in business as a bookseller and publisher, removed his house from Portland to New York, in the hope of doing better in the Empire State than he had done in Maine. Shortly after his arrival with his wife and daughter in the great city, a movement, which had been commenced by Mrs. Bethune and other ladies, for establishing infant-schools for the benefit of the poor, took active form in New York. A committee was formed, on which were Dr. Hawks, Dr. Bethune, and many other men of name and note. They wanted female teachers. One school was to be opened by them near St. Thomas' Church, to be placed under the care of its pastor, the famous orator and writer, Francis Lister Hawks, Doctor of Divinity ; and Mary Johnson, whose grace and tact were known to many ladies and clergymen on the new committee, was asked to undertake the charge ; which she did at once, from a high sense of duty ; though this charge of a hundred and fifty children was sure to be a heavy burthen to a girl not yet beyond her teens.

Rooms were now hired on the ground-floor of Union Church, in Princes Street ; notices were sent into the houses and cabins all about ; and when the doors of her school were thrown open, Mary found her benches flooded with refuse from the quays and lanes. The little things who came to her were dirty and in rags ; they hardly knew their own names ; many of them had no homes, and could not tell where their mothers lived. All the small miseries of a great city seemed to be poured into the schoolroom under Union Church through these open doors. But Mary had her heart in the toil. She put these tiny wretches into rows and classes—the younger chits together, the older girls by themselves, and taught them to march in step, and to sing in time. She induced them to wash their faces and mend their clothes. She read prayers for them, and explained the Bible to them. In a few months these imps and elfs of the river-side were changed into the likeness of human beings. Some fell back, no doubt ; the tides of the world being far too strong for an infant-school to stem ; but the work of cleansing, shaping, and restoring still went forward under Mary's care ; the little ones coming to her when they could, and staying as long as the house-keeper would let them stay.

Many a poor mother, as she tramped through the streets, was only too glad to find a place in which for six or seven hours she could leave her homeless child. The Rev. Francis Hawks and the committee were coming to feel very happy in their success, when a simple incident occurred, which was to carry away their teacher into another sphere.

CHAPTER XII.

PIOUS COURTSHIP.

"CHURCH services are over," says George Cragin, narrating the events which brought him into his first companionship with Mary Johnson, "the congregation slowly disperse, some going one way and some another. All, save a few young men, have left the sanctuary for their homes. The latter hold a prayer-meeting for a short time, and then they too separate and go here and there. It was one of Nature's heavenly days, that Sunday in June; the sky clear as crystal, and the air sweet and balmy as the breath of infancy, when I stood in front of the church saying to myself, 'Shall I return to my home down town?' I did not always return to my boarding-house till after the evening meeting. My usual route was down Broadway, but something put the suggestion into my mind to return home through the Bowery. And why that way?

It is a good half-mile farther. Never mind that; obey orders and march. So down the Bowery I started. I was by no means partial to that great thoroughfare of butchers' and Bowery boys; too many roughs and rowdies promenaded its sidewalks on Sundays to suit my taste. Inwardly, however, I felt at peace with all mankind just then, and was humming to myself as I walked straight a-head, passing the gay and the thoughtless,—

‘Jesus, I Thy cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.’

When, having nearly reached the Bowery Theatre, I was suddenly surprised and brought to a stand-still, by being confronted, not by rowdies walking three abreast, with pants turned up at the bottom showing the white lining, and each with a cigar in the cavity of his figure-head, but by a beautiful, smiling face (who ever saw a smiling face that was not beautiful?), the owner of which was a Miss Mary E. Johnson, the infant-school teacher of our church. We had never spoken to each other before, to my recollection, although members of the same religious body. Perhaps there had never been a necessity for it, but there was one now. Miss Johnson was not alone; had she been alone

we should have simply nodded recognition and passed on. She held by the hand a little girl, not more than four years of age, who had been brought by some one into her infant Sunday-school class, at the close of which the little innocent remained uncalled for. How many children are left in one way or another, and remain uncalled for? So, Miss Johnson, whose interest in and care for children under her charge was already proverbial in that section of the city, undertook the task of finding the little one's home, or (since many of the very poor do not have homes, but only stopping-places) her owners, with no other guide than the child herself, who had taken her teacher down to the Bowery Theatre, intimating that she lived in that direction. But after fruitless wandering, for nearly an hour, Miss Johnson, becoming a little alarmed, and not knowing what to do with the 'uncalled-for' upon her hands, was returning up the Bowery when we met. Her anxiety about the child was so great that, conquering her bashfulness and sense of female propriety, that would have deterred her from speaking to a young man in the streets, she followed the stronger instinct of her heart by stopping and stating to me the facts of the case. My benevolence, acting in concert with my admi-

ration for female loveliness, needed no spur to make me a volunteer at once for the service required, being glad enough of the privilege of joining so attractive an expedition in search of the whereabouts of the child's parents. After a brief consultation we decided to return to the vicinity of the church, for the further prosecution of the search; and if no owners for the lost property appeared, then consult the elders for further advice. So, with the little one between us, we moved forward for our destination.

"It was a pleasant walk that—I remember it well. I had heard much about Miss Johnson, as being a young woman of good mind, well educated, and a model of the rules of city politeness, etiquette, etc. I thought myself, therefore, highly favoured by Providence in being thus incidentally thrown into her company; for the conviction continued to cling to me that I was still a rustic, and needed much discipline to free me from clownish habits. But little did I imagine at that time, that I had providentially met the woman with whom in future I was to take many walks and rides, and have many sittings together, both in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity.

"On arriving at the door of the school-room in

the basement of the church, we found the mother of the little one waiting patiently, and quite unconcernedly, for the child to turn up. 'Were you not alarmed for the safety of your little girl?' said Miss Johnson to the mother.

"'Lord bless ye, ma'am! how could I be troubled when my young ones be better off with you, Miss Johnson, than they be at home? I wish you had some of them all the time. But I suppose you will have enough of your own, Miss, one of these days.' This last allusion deepened the colour, already cherry-red, on the cheeks of the young teacher.

"Being relieved of the little responsibility on her hands, Miss Johnson had a greater one now to dispose of, which she had assumed by inviting an ally to assist in the search. Her parents residing nearly opposite the church, she could do no less than invite me in to tea."

George found that he was now falling into love, in some sort against his will; since he was conscious, to use his own words, that the marriage spirit was a strong antagonist of the revival spirit; and also, perhaps, because, in a dim way, he was conscious of the existence of another young girl called Sarah Steele. Sarah was still a very dear friend; now

and then he went to see her; but as he told himself that he had never opened with her a matrimonial account (a baffled attempt at kissing, I suppose, may count for nothing) he owed her no apologies.

With Mary he was soon at fever heat. "When I bid our fair friend good evening," on the second time of speaking with her, he says, "a queer sensation passed over me, quite different from any former experience. It seemed as though I had parted with a large share of myself or life. Not that it was lost in any unpleasant sense, for I felt very happy after saying that good evening."

Mary was kind to him, though in all her talk with him her chief concern appeared to be for the salvation of his soul. Her own affairs were not going on well. Cholera had compelled her to close the school; things had gone wrong with her father, who had lost his business and taken to cock-tails and rum-punch; a fierce revival had sprung up, and her lover had quitted the old connexion in which she lived to assist in building up a Free Church. Heavy clouds, therefore, lay upon her life. Not that she was hopeless; her beauty and her gracious talent brought to her side a host of friends. One young man of high

family and promising fortunes offered her his hand ; but thinking him, with all his bravery and distinction, to be a man of worldly spirit, she put the temptation of raising herself and all her family from her heart. Perhaps she was in love with George. Perhaps she had scant belief in the power of wealth to make women happy. Anyhow, she had a fine sense of duty, which absolutely forbade her to accept advantages offered to her under the stress of what might prove to be, on the part of this wealthy lover, a passing whim.

When George in turn proposed to her, she refused his love under a solemn weight of care. Was she fit for the married life ? Was not her father a man who drank ? Was not she in some sort a child of shame ? Could she consent to involve a man whom she loved in her own disgrace ? In these words she put the case before her lover :

“ You may remember that some time ago you drew me out in a conversation about marriage, in which I remarked that I had made up my mind not to marry, even if an unexceptionable life-partnership were proffered to me. You probably regarded it at the time as a girlish expression that meant exactly the opposite, if any meaning whatever

was attached to it. But you will think differently now, when you understand the ground upon which I ventured that declaration. It may not have escaped your notice altogether, when you have been at our house, that my father's conversation at times has been quite ambiguous and disconnected, —not to say meaningless and silly ; making it manifest that he was under the influence of intoxicating drinks. The confession, therefore, that I have long desired to make to you is, that my father is an intemperate man, and has been so for a number of years. The grief that this habit of his has caused my dear mother, brother, and myself, is known only to Him who 'was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' It was through this habit, and the associations to which it leads, that he lost a lucrative business. For some good and wise purpose this trial has been put upon me in my youth, and I am learning to submit to it without murmuring ; believing that all things work together for good to 'them who love God.' If it were poverty alone against which we are called upon to struggle, I should by no means regard it as a disgrace, but only an inconvenience to be avoided. But intemperance is a vice, if not a crime, because it implies a lack of self-control and

manly courage in resisting temptation to idleness and slavish appetites.

"Now will you believe me when I say to you, that I have too much regard for you to consent to disgrace your father's family by accepting your offer of marriage? I hardly need say that it has cost me many mental struggles to take this step. But I could not satisfy my sense of right without making the sacrifice."

That note from Mary Johnson fixed her fate for life. Up to this point George had thought of her only as a pretty girl, soft of voice, who made everybody love her. Now she was a heroine; a young woman capable of the highest form of sacrifice. Give her up! What had he to do with pride? His family, though of the same class, was not so good as hers; for on her mother's side, at least, she had come from the very best blood in Maine. The Cragins could not pretend to rank with the Gorhams. He therefore pressed his suit upon her. Mary paused; but her brother, the Rev. Daniel E. Johnson, joined in supporting George's prayer; and during a summer holiday, the wedding of these young hearts took place; the Rev. Daniel Johnson, now acting as the true head of his family, giving away the bride.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARRIED LIFE.

THE tricks which Cragin found in vogue among the men of Wall Street sickened him with trade; his Puritan blood, his natural taste, and his religious zeal, conspiring to make him loathe the ways which lead to success either on the quay or in the bank. Other work appeared to call him. The vice on the river side, the misery at Five Points—the thieves' slums near the Battery, the harlots' dens in Green Street—spoke to his heart. Thanks to the Rev. Charles G. Finney, and some other revival preachers, efforts were then being made to deal, on a new plan, and in a religious spirit, with the dangerous classes of New York; and this strife with ignorance and misery was the kind of work for which nature and education had prepared both Cragin and his wife. They joined in it heart and soul; becoming teachers among the poor, visitors among the cast-away, dis-


tributors of tracts, of clothes, of alms to the lowest classes in one of the most abandoned cities of this earth. Five or six years were spent by Cragin as the agent, lecturer, and publisher, first of the Maternal Association, then of the Female Benevolent Society, and next of the Female Moral Reform Society. To the last of these societies George was the male agent, working, however, under a committee of ladies.

Pass we lightly over the early years of their married and religious life ; since those years—though full of matter to the man and woman—were but the stages through which Mary was to travel on her way from legal bondage, as they called it, to a state of freedom from sin and spiritual marriage to another man. During these years they lived in the revival world, among men and women who had embraced the wildest doctrines of the New Measure and the Free Church. They were always on the watch for new lights, for personal intimations, for the coming of they knew not what. They loved each other very much ; and on George's side the passion had passed, at a very early stage of wedlock, into idolatry. Now and then a fear came on them that this isolating and exclusive love was wrong ;

since they could not help feeling that it took them from the Church ; and they began to fear lest it should end in withdrawing their hearts from God. On both sides there was an earnest striving after a nobler life. Every storm of revival energy which passed through the land in which they dwelt, caught them up in its whirl, tossed them to and fro on its angry waves, and left them stranded among a thousand broken hulls and spars.

George Cragin says :

"The spring of 1839 found us occupying the half of a dwelling in Jane Street, New York, a tenement amply sufficient for our small family. Mrs. Cragin's mind was still much exercised on the subject of perfect holiness, or salvation from sin. Being relieved from the cares and perplexities of a large family, she had leisure for reflection and self-examination. Through the agency of Mrs. Black, Mrs. Cragin formed the acquaintance of several persons called 'Perfectionists,' who claimed to have come into possession of the priceless boon of freedom from sin and condemnation. These individuals received what knowledge they possessed on the subject from Abram C. Smith and John B. Lyvere, persons



with whom John H. Noyes was associated for a short time in the year 1837. My own mind was ill at ease during this period. I can hardly describe the soul-tidal fluctuations to which I was subject. Although a nominal member of the Tabernacle Church, I seldom attended the meeting, excusing myself from duty-doing on account of the distance from my residence. I was neither in the church nor out of it—still clinging to the shadow, vainly wishing it might turn into a substance. At this juncture in my experience, attempts were made to get me back to the Third Free Church, where I expended so much of my early zeal during the revival period. The pastor, with whom I was well acquainted, employed a little flattery upon my egotism to gain my consent, saying that they wanted me to fill the vacancy of an eldership, &c. I was sore tempted to yield to their entreaties, but some unseen power kept me from the snare of official position. And, moreover, what was I to gain by turning again to the beggarly elements of dead works? Orders had been given me to *advance*; but I was slow in comprehending them. Formerly, I had looked up to ministers for guidance and instruction; I could look in that direction no longer.

My intimacy with some of them disclosed the fact that they were, as a body, powerless and penniless in the riches of the wisdom and grace of God. The blind could not lead the blind. Sinners preaching to sinners was a mockery that my whole nature loathed. At times, I was greatly dissatisfied with myself; in a word, was sick—soul-sick. But the disease that was upon me—a criminal unbelief—was an unknown one to myself and to the churches. Equally ignorant were we of the remedy—faith.”

Mary was the first to feel her way out of these troubles. The more immediate agency of her new conversion was a paper written by Father Noyes on the power of faith,—a paper which she read and pondered until light flowed in upon her soul.

“It came,” she said, “with the authority of the word of God to her inner life. Step by step it led her on, with that clear, logical conviction that characterises mathematical demonstration, for ever settling points beyond all doubtful disputation and discussion. The spirit of that paper brought her face to face with the practical questions of believing, submission and confession, not at some future time, at a more convenient

season, but now—present tense, imperative mood.” Her husband then proceeds with the story of her inner life:—

“For several weeks she spent much time in prayer, saying but little to myself or any one, for her feelings were too deep and intense for expression, except to Him who hears the earnest, secret prayer of the honest-hearted seeker after truth. Mrs. Cragin had one weakness of character that greatly distressed her—a quick temper. At times, when the tempter would suddenly spring that snare upon her she would be overwhelmed with condemnation, which for the time being would cause her to despair of salvation. So the question would be thrust at her again and again, when she was on the point of confessing Christ in her a Saviour from all sin, ‘You may be saved from other faults, but not from your passionate anger when suddenly provoked.’ And again, that unbelieving demon would insinuate to her, that if after making the confession that Christ had saved her from all sin, she should be overcome by her old enemy, all would be lost, and that Christ’s power was insufficient to cast out a devil so subtle as the one with which she had in vain contended for so many years. Finally,

the controversy that had been going on within was narrowed down to this single point, 'Is Christ within me?' I will quote a paragraph from the article so instinct with life to her soul:

"'If the inquirer declares himself willing to part with his idols, and yet cannot believe, we must search through his spirit again for the reason of his unbelief. Perhaps he is saying in his heart, 'I would believe if I could *feel* that Christ is in me, and I am saved;' in other words, 'I will believe the testimony of my own feelings, but not the word of God.' This is wrong. A right spirit says, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar. God says He has given me His Son and eternal life; my feelings contradict His record; my feelings are the liars, God is true; I know and will testify that Christ is in me a whole Saviour, because God declares it, whether my feelings accord with the testimony or not.' If you wish for peace and salvation by the witness of the Spirit *before* you believe, you wish for the fruit before there is any root. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are the *consequences* of faith; the word of God, and that only, is its foundation.'

"Mrs. Cragin," says her husband, "had gone through the conflict. . . ."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE WORLD.

THE doctrine of a life without sin was made to rest on a belief that through the power of faith a man may be able to cast out from his nature the spirit of self. The selfish spirit was one with the evil spirit. All true virtue began with renunciation. To give up self was to give up sin, and to live for God alone was the highest act of grace. "Follow me," had been a call to the elect for ever. Leave all,—leave every one, be it house and land, be it flocks and herds, be it even wife and child ; cast all these things behind thee, if thou wouldst save thy soul alive ! Such were the words addressed to a believer's heart. All things near and dear must be laid on the altar of sacrifice ; rank, riches, pride, ambition, peace, and love. If a man would be freed from sin, his faith in God must be perfect ; his abandonment of self complete. God must become to him all in all.

This act of renouncing self in the heart is the conflict to which George refers. Mary had always been less worldly in her ways than her husband was—more trustful and confiding, more like a saint and a child, as good women are apt to be, especially when their thoughts have taken a religious turn. She was now ready for the sacrifice, eager to spend and be spent.

“Mrs. Cragin had gone through the conflict,” says the idol-worshipper, “and a severe one it was, of giving up husband, child, mother, and brother, the most cherished of her household gods. She had counted the cost, moreover, of being cast out of society, if not rejected and disowned by relatives, and turned into the street by her husband; so great was the odium cast upon the so-called heresy of Perfectionism. With the resolution and heroic purpose of the noble Esther, of Bible history, to take the step before her, saying, ‘If I perish, I perish,’ she dared all consequences and made the confession that Christ was in her a present and everlasting Saviour from sin.

“I well remember the day, the hour, and the place, in which she tremblingly obeyed the inspiration of her heart in confessing an indwelling Christ. I had returned home from my place of

business at the usual hour, five o'clock in the afternoon. We were in our basement dining-room alone. After a pause of silence, she said, 'I confess Christ in me a Saviour from all sin : I shall never sin again.' I believe that confession was heard and recorded in heaven, causing angels to rejoice over the victory thus gained—for they know the value of souls."

George followed his wife into this non-selfish church, as he would have followed her into any other ; for his soul was her soul, his mind her mind ; and he seems to have had, at that date, no wish, no hope, beyond doing her will and living in her love. From the day of their wedding, his passion for his lovely wife had been burning into whiter heat. About this time his love for her had increased to the point of fanaticism—to that of idolatry, when she bore him his first-born child. What she did, he must do ; whither she went, he must go ; her country must be his country, and her God his God. Mary was his law ; he had not yet come to see, only to fear, that this superstition of the heart was an evil spirit, to be driven out of his soul at any and every cost before he could be reconciled in soul to heaven.

He was to learn it all in time ; but the out-

ward trouble came upon him sooner than the inward. Scouts and spies, who seem to abound in churches however holy, carried the news of George's conversion to the doctrine of a life on earth untouched by selfishness, unstained by sin, to several of the reforming ladies of his committee—members of the Female Reform Society—who forthwith called a meeting of the board to condemn him. Mary wept for joy at this sound of a coming storm. She had prepared her soul for persecution. She wished to make some visible sacrifice for the truth. All that she had yet yielded up to God was a form—a dream—an allegory—a phrase. It was only in terms that she could be said to have given up father and mother, husband and child. But the angry matrons of the Reform Society were about to bring her sacrifices home. Their questions were rough, and to the point. What right had a man in a free country to change his mind? What could induce a moral reformer to begin meddling with religious truth? Where was the need for one, whose duty lay among thieves and fallen women, to trouble himself about salvation from sin? In an angry mood these ladies came into the board-room. George was told to stand up before them,

while thirty pair of bright eyes scanned his figure from head to foot, as though they had expected to see hoofs, and horns, and tail to match. What had he to say in explanation and defence?

Not much. He was a free man. He lived in a free state. He thought he was acting in his right. He knew that he was a better man for the change which had come upon his spirit.

Hoot! said the Editress of a journal published by the Female Reformers, here is the Battle Axe letter,—an infamous letter, an infernal letter: this letter is from the pen of Noyes. Could a godly man write such a thing as that?

George did not know. The Battle Axe letter, he had heard, referred to what might be done by holy men and woman at some future time,—perhaps on this planet, perhaps in the higher spheres. He had nothing to say about it, since he did not understand it; and his case stood solely on the paper called the Power of Faith.

He was dismissed from office, and Mary wept upon his neck for joy.

Turned out into the world, despised, condemned of men, the pair put on, as it were, the raiment of bride and groom. Mary wrote to her new teacher, Father Noyes:

“ While I am writing to you I am weeping for joy. My dear husband one week since entered the kingdom. When I tell you that he has been the publishing agent of the *Advocate of Moral Reform*, and had been born but three days when they cast him out, you will rejoice with me. Ah, Brother Noyes, how have the mighty fallen! In him you will find a most rigidly upright character,—Grahamism, and Oberlin perfection all in ruins. How he clung to Oberlin, as with a death-grasp! How confident was he that none were saved from sin but mere Grahamites! How disgusted with the conduct of Perfectionists! The Lord has pulled down strong towers. Bless the Lord!—on the first of December he will be without money and without business. How this rejoices me!”

Such was the spirit in which Mary Cragin took the cross of persecution on herself.

The last words of her letter were hardly true. George had been a prudent saver of his means, and, without telling his wife about his thrift, he had put up more than a hundred dollars in the bank. If they were poor, they were not penniless. “ We shall stand by,” said Mary, strong in her faith, “ and let the Lord provide.”

The two leading men of their new way of thinking in the State of New York were the Rev. Abram C. Smith and the Rev. John B. Lyvere. Smith lived at Rondout Creek, on the North river, about two miles from Kingston, seventy-five miles from New York. Lyvere had a house in the city. With both these Saints the Cragins made acquaintance, and from both they received advice and help. "We looked up to these persons," says George, "as our teachers and guides, regarding ourselves as mere babes in Christ, to be cared for and fed by others with the milk of the word of life." To Abram C. Smith, a bold, strong man, of large experience and resolute will, they became attached by the closest ties of friendship and brotherhood.

Mary was so pretty, so clever, so engaging, that her house in Jane Street soon became a gathering place for the Saints of New York, who dropped in for counsel, for reproof, perhaps also for gossip. But the best of us are hardly better than the angels. George soon found that some of those Saints who had come to pray remained to flirt. At least, he thought so, and the mere suspicion made him wretched.

"I have to confess," he writes, in his simple

story, "that my wife had become a very popular member of our fraternity, receiving rather more attention from some of the brotherhood than suited my taste. One case in particular, with which I was occasionally disturbed, was that of a brother whose social antecedents presented anything but a clean record, although he had been a member of the Methodist Church for many years. That at which I took offence most frequently was his use of coarse language. Not possessing the faculty of concealing my feelings, I became rather an unpopular member of our circle. Placed thus between two fires, legality on the one hand and licentiousness on the other, my position led me into severe conflicts with the powers of darkness, and was anything but an enviable one. Many and many a time, as I walked the streets of the city, did I repeat to myself the verse,—

‘ The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I can not, desert to His foes.’

“ I gained many a victory in spirit, devoutly hoping that each conflict would be the last encounter with the enemy of my peace.”

Of course, in George’s state of mind at that time, it was impossible for him to obtain, and almost

irrational for him to desire, a perfect repose of mind. As he says, in looking back from the heights which he subsequently gained:

“ Those desires for peace before the devil was cast out of my whole nature were, of course, childish and egotistical. But we had entered a new school, and accepted such teachers as offered themselves to us. I needed help.”

That help which he needed for casting out the selfish spirit from his heart, and curing himself of his old idolatry of his pretty wife, was near at hand, in the person of the Rev. Abram C. Smith.

CHAPTER XV.

ABRAM C. SMITH.

“THE man to whom we looked for help, and in whom we had the most confidence,” says Cragin, “was Abram C. Smith.”

The Rev. Abram C. Smith, the man by whom they were to be purged of the selfish spirit, and made fit for life in a higher sphere—who was to become George’s Spiritual guide and Mary’s Spiritual husband—was of a type, a class, an order, not peculiar perhaps to the American soil, yet nowhere to be found so strongly and sharply marked as in New England and New York. To begin with his list of merits, he had the true kind of name for a teacher, a name of three parts : the first part, a personal name, Abram ; the third part, a family name, Smith ; and lying between these parts, an emphatic letter, *C.* on which the voice was to rest in speaking, and which was never to be written out in full. Nearly all the marked men among the Saints

have this sign : as John *B.* Foot, Abram *C.* Smith, John *B.* Lyvere, John *H.* Noyes. But Abram *C.* had something about him far more potent than a name. He prided himself on being a zealot among the zealous, a free man among the free. He had all the virtues, and many of the vices, of the American frontier men. Born with an iron frame and a burning pulse, he was noted, even as a lad, for his hard ways of life and for his earnest speech. Very few youngsters equalled him in the power of getting through hard work on hard fare. In felling timber, in slitting rails, in trenching fields, in digging wells, in raising shanties, very few workmen could compete with Abram *C.* Like nearly all Yankee lads, he was a man while yet a boy ; free of the world, the flesh, and the devil in his teens ; loud, pinched, eager, resolute, talkative. From his cradle he had been religious, after his kind. In youth he had received a peculiar call ; when he had joined a church of New York Methodists, in whose body he began his ministerial career. To use Cragin's words, " he possessed some excellent traits of character ; he was naturally very affectionate, kind-hearted, and self-sacrificing ; he possessed a good intellect ; and had he been well

educated, and learned the spirit of obedience in his youth, he would have adorned either the pulpit or the bar." But he had scarcely been at school, and he had never learned obedience in his youth. All that a lad can learn in the street, in the field, and in a common school, he knew. He was great in traffic; had a keen eye to business; he knew the Bible by rote; and he seldom failed in getting a slice of every cut loaf for himself.

Among the new friends to whom his conversion made him known, the Rev. Abram C. found many who liked his keen speech, his firm will, his zeal for the salvation of souls. Cold, hard, enduring—sharp of tongue, prompt in wit, hot for the fray—he breathed the very spirit of revival fury. From the moment that his bishop granted him a license to preach, he became a Yankee Saint. "He went great lengths," says Cragin, "in fasting, in praying, in simplicity of dress, in frugality and plainness of food, and he carried his notion of duty-doing to the topmost round of the legal ladder."

Like most of his countrymen, he married young; but his first love died. Some of his leaders thought he should take a second wife; and by their persuasion, even more than from his own inclining, he proposed to a young Methodist

woman, who, besides being tall, pretty, and accomplished, had a peculiar and precious religious gift. I suppose the girl had fits. She described herself as receiving a sort of angels' visits, which disturbed her mind, and reft her limbs of their natural strength. After one of these visits, her friends would find her on the floor writhing and prostrate. Abram heard of these troubles of the young lady—proofs of her exceeding favour with the higher powers—and being anxious to stand well with the higher powers himself, he proposed to their favourite, and was happy in his suit. Three children had been born on his hearth, by his first wife ; his second wife brought him an infant ; but the mother who bore it, in spite of her accomplishments and her beauty, brought her husband no peace. In the meetings of her church, she was all smiles and tears ; her heart open to all, her voice soft to all ; but in the privacy of her own house, she showed another and darker side of her nature. One who lived in the same log-house with her some time, described her as a devil's puzzle. She was good and kind, but she had no sense of truth. She could feel for another's pain, but she could see no difference between right and wrong. When Abram C. got vexed with her, as he often did,

he would call her "a solid lie." Then, he would curse in his heart, and even in the hearing of his friends, those busybodies in the Methodist Church who had driven him, by their false praises, into marrying a wretch who had nothing to recommend her but a stately figure, and a pair of very bright eyes.

Such were the two Saints at Rondout Creek, who were tempting George and Mary Cragin to share their home.

"Mr. Smith's claims to a superior experience, and to a high position in the New Jerusalem Church, now being organised on earth, were by no means small. Had he not sounded the depths of Methodism? And Wesleyan Perfectionism too,—had he not freely imbibed until it had ceased to afford him nourishment of any kind?"

The winter of 1840 was passing away and spring coming round. The time for which the Cragins had rented the tenement in Jane Street would soon expire. The question, therefore, where had the Lord prepared a place for them? came up for decision.

Mary did not seem to care. She wanted to bear her cross, and if it were heavy enough her heart would be content. George had nursed from his youth upwards a more worldly spirit;

and he preferred to see some way in which he could earn his daily bread. Love made a good deal for him ; but, in his view, love itself would be safer for a large supply of hominy and squash. The question, therefore, of what the Lord was going to provide in the way of food and lodgings, came before his mind with some peremptory sharpness.

“ I had no disposition to live in idleness ; I was born a worker, so that little credit was due to me for my industrious proclivities. Thus far in my career I had worked for my body chiefly. In that career I had been arrested by the same authority that arrested Saul of Tarsus, and ordered to expend my powers of industry for the benefit of my soul. But how to set myself to work in the cause of the latter interest, I did not understand. I had a strong desire to leave the city, a desire which I now think was an uninspired one. The voice of the Spirit to me doubtless was, if I could have heard it, ‘ Remain in the city till I deliver you, or send you elsewhere. If you go into the country you will have trouble in the flesh.’ But I had not learned to give my attention to the inner voice of God.”

In the meantime the Rev. Abram C. Smith continued to press his kindness on them.

"From him," says George, "we had received a standing invitation to remove to his residence at Rondout, and join his family, if we could do no better. Having accepted him as our teacher, this opening of escape from the city seemed auspicious to me."

At this point it may be well to remember that the Rev. Abram C. Smith was a married man. His wife was not a saint, at least, not in her heart of hearts; but she was his wife; and if Mary Cragin was to go on a long visit to Rondout, it was well that her pleasure in the matter should be known. Even Abram C. felt that he could hardly ask the Cragins to share his home without making his wife a partner in his suit. "Mr. Smith," says George, "for the first time called upon us in company with his wife, when the invitation to join their family was renewed. We were unacquainted with the real character of this woman. In his previous interviews with us, Mr. Smith had said so little about his wife, that we had almost forgotten that he had one. In person, she was prepossessing and dignified. She was introduced to us as a newly made convert to Perfectionism,—a recent fruit of Mr. Smith's zealous efforts for the cause. With the Methodists she took rank among

the Sanctificationists, having many times lost her strength by a sudden illumination from some invisible sphere. So she said ; but she did not say that she had lost her sins by those mysterious trances. She failed to impress me favourably. Her good looks, her winning smiles, and professions of devotion to the cause we loved, were powerless in drawing out my heart or in securing my confidence. But, endorsed as she was by Mr. Smith, I distrusted my own impressions, and gave her the right hand of fellowship."

An invitation which the Cragins expected from an older friend than this reverend gentleman and his smiling partner failed them. The lease in Jane Street had expired. They had no house of their own. In a short time their money would be spent. All their old friends had been estranged from them by their change of faith. In a few days they would be wanting bread. What was to be their fate? As George now saw, Abram's offer of a refuge from the storm could hardly be refused. But, even at the last moment, Mary felt some doubts. She did not like to put herself and her husband into Abram's power. Perhaps she had seen some spirit in the man before which she quailed.

"How much," says George, "we needed wisdom from above to direct our steps just then, those only can judge who have been placed in similar circumstances. Move we must in some direction, and as the invitation had been repeated by both Mr. and Mrs. Smith with so much apparent sincerity, we could do no less than disregard our own impressions and follow our leader somewhat blindly."

Yes, the leap was made. "On the seventh of March, 1840, therefore, our furniture was placed on board a sloop bound for Rondout; and the same evening my wife, my little ones, and myself, were escorted by Mr. Smith to a steamer destined to the same place. That voyage was not soon forgotten. Mrs. Cragin was so depressed in spirit that it was with much difficulty she could control her feelings from finding vent in a flood of tears. She afterward said to me that the moment we decided to unite ourselves with the family of Mr. Smith, darkness like an impenetrable cloud came over her mind, as though God had withdrawn from her soul the light of His fatherly countenance. Down to this point in our acquaintance with Mr. Smith, Mrs. Cragin had less confidence in and attraction for him than myself. She was now in distress of mind. The benevolence of our guide was appealed

to. He talked to her with all the tenderness and eloquence of a sainted minister in the good old days of revivals. He won her heart. Mr. Noyes, a man whom she had never seen, had, by his inspired writings, completely secured her confidence as one raised up of God to lead us into the highway of holiness. She had been hoping that Mr. Noyes would come to the city and advise us what to do; and had she been in my place I think she would have written to him for the counsel we so much needed. But lacking that advice, she accepted Mr. Smith as his representative; and knowing that I also received him in that character, she very naturally, and, unavoidably, almost extended to him the same confidence she would have done to Mr. Noyes."

CHAPTER XVI.

RONDOUT CREEK.

AT length they reached Rondout Creek, landed on the rough bank, facing the village of Rondout, in Ulster county, and saw the household in the midst of which they had come to live.

“On arriving at our destination,” says George, “we found ourselves in a family much larger than our own. Mr. Smith was living with his second wife, by whom he had one child. By his former companion he had three children—a son and two daughters, two of whom were on the verge of maturity. The dwelling he occupied—an ancient stone edifice, erected before the first war with Great Britain—stood solitary and alone, on the south side of the creek or bay directly opposite the village of Rondout, the terminus of the Delaware and Hudson canal, and the shipping depôt of the Lackawana Coal Company. As one of Mr. Smith’s cardinal virtues was economy—carried almost to

the type of parsimony—we found the interior of the house so plainly furnished that an anchorite could not have complained of superfluity in furniture, nor of sumptuousness in the bills of fare. Its frugality was a reminder of the experience of the early settlers of the country, often struggling with poverty for the right to subsist on *terra firma*. We had congratulated ourselves that we had come down to the minimum of simple, plain living, before leaving the city, and were entitled to a liberal share of righteousness, if it was to be obtained by a process of economy in food and raiment. But Mr. Smith's system of retrenchment had now thrown ours entirely into the shade."

In this dull house, with this sombre man, with this haughty woman, the Cragins took up their abode. The hard fare, the driving work, were taken as a portion of that cross which they had to bear for their souls' sake. The life was not lovely, but it held out to them a hope of peace, and it seemed to have been the lot appointed to them of God. To Mary this was the first and only thought; but George, more active and athletic than his wife, soon found a rough animal comfort in doing the tasks which his stern employer found for him on the farm.

. "Finding myself," he says, "at last in the country, and on a farm upon which I was at liberty to expend my physical energies, I was soon enjoying myself greatly in following the plough behind a noble old horse, whose only defect was that he was as blind as a bat, with Joshua, a son of Smith, for a rider. The ostensible business which Smith pursued at that time was that of foreman of a gang of hands on the opposite side of the river engaged in manufacturing lime and cement. The farm we lived upon was nominally owned by a brother of Mr. Smith, who allowed him the use of it at a moderate rent. The time of the latter was already much occupied, and my attraction being for agricultural pursuits, he placed me in charge of the farm department, while he continued in his position as agent and overseer for the lime company.

"Possessing communistic ideas and proclivities, we thus made a slight attempt to carry out the Pentecostal spirit of holding all things in common. For a while, our associative effort bade fair to be a success, so far as out-door business and self-support were concerned. I very soon became much absorbed in my new avocation.

This suited Smith, as he had earned the reputation of being a great worker himself, as well as of possessing a faculty for keeping those under him pretty constantly employed. So, with the blind horse and the lad Joshua, the ex-merchant, publisher, and reformer considered himself in favourable circumstances to secure, what few seemed to prize, the riches of godliness and contentment."

Contentment! Was he content? Were the others content? He was much in love with his wife, and perhaps he was a little jealous of the Rev. Abram C. But he felt sure of Mary; and he was only just beginning to find, through the hints of Abram C., that he had in himself a very bad spirit, which he should strive to cast out with all his might. His love for Mary was too hot and blind; it was a snare of the devil; it breathed the very soul of self; and was the sign of an unregenerate heart. That love would drive him away from God.

George felt sorry and ashamed. He knew that he loved his wife beyond every earthly good; for was she not his nurse, his guide, his queen, the light of his eye, the joy of his heart, the pride of his intellect? So far, he had not been

able to see that in loving her for her worth and beauty, he was doing any harm. The example set by his new teachers at Rondout rather pained than edified him.

"Between Mr. and Mrs. Smith, we soon discovered, no harmony existed. Indeed, there was manifestly positive alienation. A house divided against itself was not likely to offer a very peaceful retreat in which to pursue our studies as pupils in the school of faith. Mrs. Smith was now Mrs. Smith at *home*, not abroad. When she called upon us in the city, she presented herself in a character not her own, that of a meek and lowly Christian. She had no longer an occasion for such a dress. If it was put on as a bait to attract us to Rondout, it was a success."

It was not long before the bickering between the Rev. Abram C. and his wife came to an open quarrel; and George soon found some reasons for suspecting that another and prettier woman was the active, though she may have been at first the unconscious, cause of this domestic fray.

"My relation to Mr. Smith up to this time was that of a son to a father. I had from the first felt the need of a teacher. The want was

born in me, and I had heartily accepted Mr. Smith to fill that office. For a while things appeared to go on smoothly enough, so far as outdoor business was concerned; but interiorly there were indications of stormy weather. In the region of my solar-plexus, counter-currents were flowing, causing perturbations of an unpleasant character. The first change that attracted my attention was something like coolness on the part of Mr. Smith toward myself. It was rarely now that he had any communication with me except in planning the outdoor business. On the other hand, his communications with Mrs. Cragin were more and more frequent and private. Did I discover a corresponding change of coolness on the part of Mrs. Cragin, or was it a distorted imagination?"

By this time, George had made a pretty long step in his religious knowledge. He had been thinking over the doctrine of renunciation; had talked about it to Abram and Mary; and had come to see that the command to give up house and land, wife and child, might be understood in a literal sense, as a duty laid upon all the children of grace.

Thus it happened that when he began to ask himself, as he trudged after the plough,

how things were going on within doors, he could not help feeling that something more was expected from him by his teacher, if not also by his wife, than a mere sacrifice of form. What did they want? Above all, what did his idol wish him to do? As he dwelt upon their life before they had come to Rondout Creek and after, he could not help seeing that there had been a change with him for the worse. Mary had become silent and judicial; a new and very suspicious state of mind for her.

"She has very little to say to me," he said to himself, "except in the way of criticism of a spirit in me which claims her affections." Why should he not claim them? "That," says George, "was my weak point. I was stricken by the feeling of self-condemnation that came upon me." And then, he forced himself into a confession which was obviously foreign to his character. "Freely and sincerely would I admit to myself and others that in the sight of God I could claim in Mrs. Cragin no exclusive private property or privilege. That in forsaking all for Christ, as I claim to have done, my wife was included. So much was logically clear and conclusive to my understanding." All this philosophy, I imagine, was the growth of

later years. The true feelings of his heart broke out: "But my feelings, like wilful, disobedient children, would listen to no such reasoning. Being thus in bondage to irrational influences over which I had no power of control, I had all I could do to keep my own head above water without paying much attention to the conduct of others." But then, he could not leave the thing indoors alone. The thought of what his teacher might be saying to his wife confused his soul, and made his hand unsteady on the plough. Yet he had no strength to face his master, and to protect his wife. Had the reverend gentleman been a single man, Cragin might have fallen a passive victim to his force of will. But, in the haughty mistress at Rondout Creek, he found an ally on whom he had not counted.

"Mr. Smith proved himself an unwise, unskillful general in attempting the management of forces over which he had but a limited control. While he had found in Mrs. Cragin an ally, a sweetheart, and a very loveable associate, and apprehended no trouble from me, seeing that I was fast bound in chains of self-condemnation, he had not counted the cost of leaving his wife as an enemy in the rear, with the disposition and the

means of causing him serious trouble. It is barely possible, however, that he had counted on an *affaire d'amour* between his wife and myself, which, had it happened, there is no telling what the results would have been, though they would probably have been no better, but much worse. But I was in no state to fall in love with another woman. I had trouble enough on hand already, without contracting a debt for more, to be paid for at some future judgment day. I had business enough on hand, too, to get out of the idolatrous love for my wife, that I had been falling into for years, until it seemed at times as though I had got into the bottomless pit, where the more I struggled to get out the deeper I sank into hopeless despair."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SELFISH SPIRIT.


AT Oneida Creek I was struck by the keen frankness with which my young doctor of medicine told me the story of his passions ; that young doctor was George Cragin, son of the George and Mary Cragin, whose story I am now telling from his father's notes. I then felt and said that his little history of one human heart was the strangest thing I had ever either heard or read. The father's tale is certainly not less strange.

"Regardless of consequences," George continues, "Mr. Smith succeeded in compelling his wife to leave his house and take refuge over the Creek among her relatives. A more rash, inconsiderate act could not have been done, except by one wholly divested of reason ; and the motive of it soon became apparent.

"During the first week in May, the relation between Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cragin had assumed

the character of spiritual love, of the novelist type. It was not so much hatred of his wife which had caused him to turn her out-of-doors, as a fierce, crazy, amative passion—I cannot call it love—for my wife, whom he had already in spirit appropriated to himself. But he played his cards skilfully, for he so managed his hand as to throw all the responsibility of his intimacy with Mrs. Cragin upon myself. For instance, he told her one evening to feign distress of mind, or something to that effect, and to ask permission of me to repair to his room for spiritual advice. My wife was so completely magnetised by him and under his power, that she would do almost anything he bade her. Accordingly, she obtained my consent; and when she returned to me no harm was done. Unfortunately, the same sort of reason was pleaded the following night. My God, I said to myself, where is this thing to end? Are all these operations needed to cure me of the marriage spirit? Must others do evil that I may get good?

“Well, Mr. Smith said, my case was a desperate one, and desperate remedies had to be applied. Yet it did not suit me—even though my consent was given—to take medicine by proxy. Moreover, I did not really believe that Mr. Smith



was at all anxious for my recovery, if that event would require a discontinuance of the proxy medicine. But my chief difficulty and the cause of my greatest distress was attributable to a distrust of my physician. *Was he duly authorised by the powers above to pursue the course he had adopted?* Serious doubts assailed me, so powerfully that it was in vain to resist them. Inwardly I prayed, and most earnestly too, for a change of doctors, or at least a council of medical *savans*, to take my case in hand."

His prayer was answered. John H. Noyes with two other Saints, came down from Vermont to New York to attend the May meetings. It was the second week in May. On their arrival in New York, Noyes felt troubled in his mind about the doings of his disciple, Abram C. Smith, at Rondout Creek, where things were looking rather black. Mrs. Abram C. was not the kind of woman to bear her injuries in peace; in fact, she had made so loud a noise about her wrongs, that the rough woodmen and watermen of Rondout village had been stung into threats of crossing the creek in boats and making a midnight call on the Saints. Noyes had heard some rumour of these threats. "Anyhow," he said to his two friends

in New York, "I am afraid there is mischief at work in Smith's family," and hinted that they would do well in going up the Hudson river to that place. Noyes arrived at Rondout Creek in time to prevent loss of life; for a warrant had been issued that day in Kingston, the nearest town, against the Rev. Abram C. for a breach of the peace in turning his wife out-of-doors; and the whole population of Rondout village was arming itself with axe and torch, with tar and feathers, to redress the woman's wrongs. An attack on the stone house was expected every hour. What was to be done? Should they stand their ground and fight it out with the mob? Abram C. was all for war. To barricade the house, to arm his people, and to resist his invaders to the death, would have been his policy. Noyes took the opposite ground—Peace with the outside world, criticism and sincerity among yourselves, was his prompt advice. News flew across the Creek into the village that a peacemaker was at work, and no one stirred against the house that night. Noyes recommended Abram to submit; to obey the judge's warrant; and, in fact, to go across to Kingston and deliver himself up. Smith was rude and stiff; but in the end he saw that unless he gave way to the police

he would be murdered by the mob. This point being carried, Father Noyes inquired into the state of things in the house, and rebuked Smith sharply for the course he had taken with his wife. The facts were then brought out in regard to the intimacy which had sprung up between Smith and Mary Cragin. The facts were only too clear, in whatever way they were to be judged. George, I think, came off the worst of the three. To use his own words: "They were admonished faithfully, but in love. A claiming, legal spirit in me was the scape-goat upon whom the sins of both parties were laid. I joined with the rest in denouncing the spirit of legality, and freely forgave Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cragin, considering myself quite as much in the wrong as themselves, for what had passed."

Things being placed on this footing for the past, the little colony of saints and sinners spent the evening in listening to Noyes. He criticised Perfectionists generally for a spirit of unteachableness and a lack of humility. He also commented on such passages as these: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not;" "Let no man seek his own;" "The law was made for

the lawless and disobedient ;” “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Noyes said he had entered the higher school of Christ who taught by grace and truth. The lower law school of Moses was still good for people who were still barbarians and half-civilised, who were yet too coarse to comprehend and appreciate the power of truth as a refining element. When believers are sufficiently refined to receive the spiritual truth taught by Christ and Paul, it enters into them, changes their disposition, and thus secures in them obedience to the divine will.

“I felt myself,” says George, “richly rewarded for all the petty trials I had thus far endured ; was willing, I thought, to pay any price for the full and free salvation which Christ had brought into the world. To forsake all for Him—*wife included*, as well as all other valuables, or whatever our attachments had converted into valuables—had now with me a matter-of-fact meaning that I was just beginning to understand. When Christ said, ‘Except a man hate father, mother, wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,’ he fired a ball into the very centre and heart of the marriage and family spirit.

I had been hit, and the egotistical marriage spirit was bleeding at every pore."

The next day Noyes went over with George and Abram C. to Kingston, two miles from Rondout, and settled with the magistrate of that place who had issued the warrant for his arrest ; giving bonds that Smith should in future keep the peace and support his wife. But the bad spirit in the village of Rondout was not quelled. Some of the rough lads wanted a spree ; and to the wild spirits of the river-side very few amusements offered so much fun as tarring and feathering a couple of preachers in a good cause. Again a council was held in the stone house. Noyes, whose voice was still for peace, proposed to leave towards evening for his home, taking Smith and his eldest daughter along with him to Vermont. This plan was accordingly acted upon. Noyes thought that as the mob regarded Smith as the chief offender, his absence might pacify their feelings so as to allow of the other members of the family remaining in peace. And such was the fact. George rowed the company to Kingston Point, where they were to embark on board a steamer for Albany. On returning to the house early in the evening, he found everything quiet. No demonstrations were to be either

seen or heard; and George and Mary were now left alone—the idolater and his idol. “During Mr. Smith’s absence,” says George, “I had a time of repose and sober reflection. My past trials, the dangers encountered, the visit from Mr. Noyes, and many other stirring events, seemed much more like a dream or a story of fiction than a reality. The talks, too, given us by Mr. Noyes during his brief sojourn with us, brought an influence of life. I was reminded of the words of another Teacher, who said to a penitent offender, ‘Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.’

“I had been subordinate to Mr. Smith, and had confided in him, up to the time of this visit from Mr. Noyes. But when I reflected upon his return, an unpleasant sensation came over me. Had he been the occasion of much suffering to me, and was I afraid of more? After an absence of two weeks Mr. Smith was again at home. I was much pleased to see him again in our family. Mr. Noyes, while with us, advised that there should be no further intimacy or special conferences between Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cragin; repeating what he had said three years before in the Battle Axe letter, viz. ‘Woe to him who abolishes the law of the apostasy, before he stands in the holi-

ness of the resurrection.' Believing that the advice would be faithfully followed, I looked for greater unity and more fellowship than ever between Mr. Smith, Mrs. Cragin, and myself. In this expectation, however, I was sadly disappointed. It was but a few days before he commenced a game of hypocrisy, that was carried on for weeks before it came to the light. In my presence, he would talk in his peculiarly sanctimonious or methodistical style, clothing his ideas in mystical language, having no other end in view, probably, than the blinding of eyes that might possibly discover the imposition the tempter was inciting him to practise upon comparatively innocent victims. When alone with Mrs. Cragin, his talk was altogether of another type. Before he could recover his power over her, he must in some way regain her confidence. He was well aware that Mrs. Cragin's confidence in Mr. Noyes was greatly strengthened by his last visit to us. So it would not do to attempt to undermine her foundation of firm faith in the leader of New Haven Perfectionism. To accomplish his end, therefore, he must make it appear to her that he, Smith, had the confidence of Mr. Noyes to the fullest extent ; and, being an adept in throw-

ing out insinuations and enigmas, he began the game by hinting to her that Mr. Noyes virtually approved of their past proceedings ; and that his late disapproval and public criticism of their acts was chiefly for my benefit.

“ While thus playing a successful game in winning back his power over my wife, he resorted to his old trick of keeping me in a harmless, helpless condition, by loading me down heavily with hard work, self-condemnation, and evil-thinking. Unwittingly he was helping me. The pressure thus put upon me stirred up all the earnestness within me to find the justification and peace of Christ. With my views of the great salvation of God, I very well understood that *I* could not carry the marriage spirit with me into the heavenly kingdom, if Mr. Smith could ; neither could I avoid making the discovery that he was freighting his barge with the same commodity that I was throwing overboard. However, my business was now with God, and not with man. The victory that I was daily praying for was a reconciliation with God, and contentment in His service. And that victory came at last. Labouring alone in the field, I had a new view of God’s infinite goodness and mercy. The

humanity of God, so to speak, in the sacrifice of His only beloved Son on the cross for the redemption of the world, was so glorious an exhibition of His disinterested love, that my egotism seemed to vanish like darkness before the rising sun. My heavy burdens and great sorrow were all gone. I exclaimed aloud, 'My God and my Father! I can suffer for ever, and yet be for ever happy in beholding Thy great and pure love to mankind.' Evil-thinking of my wife and Mr. Smith had been taken from me. I was at peace with my circumstances and everybody about me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HEAVENLY BRIDALS.

GEORGE CRAGIN did not know how far the thing had gone between his wife and the Rev. Abram C. Smith. He knew that they had done wrong,—done that for which the law would have given him swift redress. He did not know that these two beings had actually gone through a form of marriage, and had pledged their souls to each other for a partnership of love, through all eternity. Yet that was the fact. The Rev. gentleman had persuaded Mary that neither his dead wife nor his living wife was the natural mate of his soul, and that she, Mary Cragin, was that mate. Mary seems to have striven long against this dogma, though she succumbed at last; and their heavenly bridals had been duly performed.

Late in the summer Abram had to go out preaching. Some Saints from Pennsylvania came to Rondout, and it was agreed that Abram should

go back with them to their country, passing through New York. Smith desired that Mary should accompany the Saints down the river, where a week in the city would give her a pleasant change. True to his crafty spirit, Abram contrived that the first hint for such a journey should proceed from George, who was wrought upon by a third person to make it, as his wife would not otherwise think of such a course. George saw that she wished to go, though, at the moment of leaving with these religious friends, she paused and sighed, as though she would even then turn back. In the end, adieus were said, and the parties went on board the boat.

“When nearly a week had passed,” says George, “I received a few lines from my wife, saying that she intended to leave for home the next evening, and should be happy to meet me on the arrival of the boat at Rondout. That letter, although very short, affected me strangely. It was not the *letter*, but the spirit or magnetic current back of it that touched my heart with a kind of fervent heat, that melted at once all the icy feelings that had imperceptibly accumulated toward her. On entering the ladies’ cabin, Mrs. Cragin met me with a subdued kind of greet-

ing, yet so affectionate and sincere, that my equanimity was at fault, as tearful eyes involuntarily bore witness. I soon discovered, however, that there was a heavy burden upon her mind, the nature of which she evidently had no freedom to reveal; still the evidence of a return of her kindly feelings towards me was indisputable, if my inner senses and emotions were to be accepted as proper witnesses in the case. But I had so thoroughly disciplined myself to the minding of my own business, that I neither demanded nor asked for explanations. My sympathies, however, were silently enlisted in her behalf. Could I forget the past?"

Much to his surprise, he heard, a few days later, that the Rev. Abram C., instead of going on his mission at once into Pennsylvania, had loitered for a whole week in New York. What had kept him there? Ah, what?

Some call of business carried George Cragin to New York, and he very properly called on his fellow-saints, the Lyveres. When he was entering their house, he saw that some great trouble weighed upon Mrs. Lyvere's mind. While he was asking himself what it could mean, she said:


"Mr. Cragin, the moment you entered our house,

the impression came upon me that the Lord had sent you here that I might have an opportunity of unburdening my mind to you. You are aware," she continued, "that Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cragin have lately spent a week in the city. They were guests of ours most of the time. I had been made acquainted with their unusual proceedings at Rondout last May, and with the subsequent criticism given them by Mr. Noyes. I was also aware of the promise made by Mr. Smith that there should be no repetition of like proceedings or improper intimacy between himself and your wife. That promise, I assure you, Mr. Cragin, has been broken—judging from the evidence of their guilt in my possession. Their conduct while here was very strange. Your wife did her best to appear cheerful, and to hide from me the trial that was upon her. But she could not. Tears would come to her eyes in spite of her will to keep them back, indicating trouble within. Mr. Smith spent hours in talking to her, and at times his language was so severe, that it aroused my indignation against him to the highest degree. One night I overheard him say to her that if she revealed to you their secret marriage, it would cause an everlasting separation between them. They occupied ——'

“‘Stop, stop!’ I replied, ‘I have heard enough. Let the details go; I care not for them. That man, that infernal hypocrite has deceived me—has lied to me over and over again. But I must keep cool,’ I said more calmly; ‘Mr. Smith himself is a victim. The devil, the old serpent that seduced mother Eve, is at the bottom of all this mischief and wrong. Mr. Smith’s abuse of me, and the seduction of my wife, are trifles compared with the wound Mr. Smith has inflicted upon the sacred cause of truth. But I will say no more. I shall be at home to-morrow morning; I believe Mrs. Cragin will tell me the truth, however much it may implicate herself.’”

During this conversation between Mrs. Lyvere and George, the Rev. John B. Lyvere had said but little, though the few words which he dropt corroborated the testimony of his wife.

With a heavy heart George went on board the steamer that was to take him home, to the cold stone house at Rondout, to the Spiritual wife of Abram C. Smith. He sat on deck all night and watched the summer stars come forth. The voyage was long; for the vessel had to push her way against wind and tide, so that morning dawned before she came alongside the tiny wharf. George




jumped into a canoe, to paddle himself across the creek.

“The morning sun shone calmly and beneficently upon the still waters of the bay, as I entered a skiff to row myself to the solitary stone house on the opposite shore. As I drew near the landing, only a few rods from our dwelling, I saw the slender form of my wife standing upon the pier to offer her accustomed greeting. But as I approached still nearer, so that she could read the countenance I wore, the playful smile upon her face instantly vanished. With all my mental victories, edifying reflections, and good resolves, during a sleepless night on the Hudson, I still had the burden to carry of a sad, heavy heart. I was a poor hand at concealing the state of things within me. My wife interpreted at a glance the story I had to tell. We met on the shore, and a sorrowful meeting it was. ‘George,’ said my wife, ‘you know all; the secret is out, and I thank God for revealing it.’ ‘Yes, Mary,’ I replied, ‘lying, like murder, will out.’ ‘I will make a clean breast, now,’ she said, ‘for I can carry the works of darkness no longer.’ ‘Wait awhile,’ I replied, ‘till I get rested.’ I could not talk. A conflict was going on within. Two spirits were struggling for the mastery over me.

One would reject her and treat her with the icy coldness and scorn of the unforgiving world. The other would forgive the penitent, and by sincerity, tempered with kindness, lead her back to the Rock, Christ, from whence she had strayed. The good spirit prevailed. We walked to the house like two soldiers who had been badly whipped by the enemy—cast down, but not destroyed. ‘We will be brother and sister after this,’ I remarked, ‘as we don’t seem to prosper in this warfare, as husband and wife.’”

Brother and Sister! The spirit of the old German monks and nuns was upon them. George felt that the crisis of his life had come. He knew that he had been a sad idolater of beauty, wit, and worth. He hoped and prayed that a calmer spirit would be his. He felt no more anger in his heart towards Mary than he would have cherished towards a sister who had gone astray and had come to throw herself at his feet.



CHAPTER XIX.

CONFLICT.

GEORGE continues his story :—

“The day I returned from New York was long to be remembered as a day of confessions. Mrs. Cragin voluntarily confessed all that was in her heart relating to the intimacy that had existed for the past six months between her and Mr. Smith. Her revelations were not made to cover up faults, but to be delivered from them. She was serious and sorrowful, but her sorrow was not of the world. While listening to her story, the exhortation, ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed,’ came home to me clothed with new force and beauty. Indeed my own heart was so affected and softened by hearing her relate the simple facts in the case without manifesting the least disposition, as I could see, to screen herself from judgment behind the more aggravated faults of another, that I too

wanted to confess my own weakness and faults, and cover up those of others. I realised also, that Mrs. Cragin felt, as all true penitents must feel, that God, much more than man or society, had been wronged by the evil done. When one sees the faults of which one is guilty, and has a hatred of them, a sincere confession of them to others is, virtually, a separation from those faults; and the turning of the heart to God in prayer causes the healing power of His love and forgiveness to flow in upon the wounded spirit."

The explanation between George and Mary as to what was past, and the understanding between them as to what must be, could not be all in all. Abram was away from Rondout; but he would, of course, come back; and from the man's nature it was clear that he could never be restrained from trying to enforce his rights upon the woman who had contracted towards him the obligations of a Spiritual wife.


"The return of Mr. Smith from his mission south was looked for daily. I had not thought so much about dreading his return, until Mrs. Cragin said to me one day, 'George, you can hardly have a conception of the terrible dread I have at times of meeting that man. The very thought of the

bare possibility of again coming under his power is distressing to me.' 'You must put your trust in God,' I replied; 'He can protect you against all harm from men or devils.' While thus exhorting Mrs. Cragin to faith and courage, I was also exhorting myself to exercise the same, in view of the necessity of meeting an old friend in the possible character of an antagonist. I sincerely felt my inability to cope with a spirit so strong as that which I well knew Mr. Smith possessed. With prayerful endeavour, therefore, to fortify ourselves for what might be before us, we patiently waited the issue of coming events.

"Late on the following Saturday night, the family being all in bed, the lights extinguished, and not a sound to be heard save the pattering rain and the monotonous sound of the incoming tide, a loud *rap, rap, rap*, was heard on the front door, which was soon followed by the well-known voice of Mr. Smith. The first knock thus heard startled the chastened one beside me so suddenly, as to cause much bodily agitation and trembling. As I left my bed to obey the summons, Mrs. Cragin begged of me not to allow Mr. Smith to enter the room we occupied. On opening the door to let him in, he extended his hand to me, which I

declined to take, saying as I did so, 'No, Mr. Smith, I cannot take the hand of one who has so cruelly wronged me;' and then adding, 'Your deeds of darkness have come to the light.' His only reply was, 'Where is Mary? I want to see her.' 'You cannot,' I replied. 'Moreover, she absolutely declines seeing you, or speaking to you. She has revealed all;' and so saying, I returned to my room.

"Little indeed was the sleep that visited our pillows that stormy night. From the tone of his voice and the attitude of his spirit, we well knew that no conviction of guilt, no repentance of evil committed, had overtaken Mr. Smith during his absence. We felt, too, that his heart was set on war, if need be, for the recovery of his fancied rights to the woman whom his delusion had led astray. What a sudden change of the position of the parties! Mrs. Cragin was now anxious to shun the very man whom, only a few weeks before, she had implicitly trusted and loved to adoration. 'George,' she said to me, 'you must not for one moment leave me alone with him. He will invent every conceivable plan to see me; prevent him.' I promised to do my best. Thus the night was spent, very much, I imagine, as an army spends the night in front of the enemy.



“The morning came quite soon enough, for I had to confess the presence of feelings very much opposed to the inevitable conflict I saw before me. But as there was no such alternative as retreat from the position in which Providence had placed me, I arose with the prayer in my heart for grace to do that which would please the Spirit of truth. In the course of the morning, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Cragin and myself, were alone in the sitting-room. Mr. Smith put on a triumphant air, inviting no candid talk or investigation of his past proceedings; neither did he make any concessions as to the questionable wisdom of the course he had adopted, but stood firmly and resolutely on the assumed ground that he had pleased God in all that he had done; appealing moreover to Heaven, in a presumptuous way, for the justification of his deeds. This was said, not directly to me, but, as one might suppose, to an imaginary audience before whom he was delivering a sermon on self-justification. His manner of defence was peculiarly his own, being a compound of preaching, praying, and ejaculation, interpolated with singing, amens, and hallelujahs. Of course, I was regarded by him with great contempt for presuming to sit in judgment upon

his course and actions. Nevertheless, I stood firmly by the judgment I had given, namely, that he had been, and was still, under the delusion of the devil. I repeated that judgment, whenever he addressed me directly, adding very little besides, regarding it my main business to remain by Mrs. Cragin according to my promise."

George could find the strength to make new conditions with his idol; but he could not yield her to the reverend gentleman who claimed her as a Spiritual wife.

George tells the story of his struggle with the mastering spirit of the Methodist preacher in words which I prefer to save. No art of mine shall come between the reader and this strange confession from a wounded soul.

"From morning till night the battle thus raged with unabated fierceness; not however in the form of combative words, as between two flesh-and-blood assailants, but it was the wrestling of our spirits with principalities and invisible powers, to see which would carry the day. Once, his eloquence in preaching and praying might have conquered me, as I was, I suppose, easily affected by such kind of demagogism, provided the performer had my confidence. But understanding

for a certainty as I then did, that the person thus speaking was not to be trusted, and that he was given to deception and lying, he might as well have undertaken to melt the Rocky Mountains by his declamation, as to move me from my convictions. Mr. Smith was under the erroneous impression that the affections of Mrs. Cragin were still his; and that if he could only overpower the *legal* husband, the *spiritual* one would readily and easily recover his lost prize. Hence his unceasing efforts.

“Finally, his zeal began to wane, seeing that he was losing rather than gaining ground. So, early in the evening, he suddenly changed his base, by declaring that he had made up his mind to start immediately for Putney. ‘Very well,’ I replied, ‘you could not do a better thing. My confidence in Mr. Noyes,’ I continued, ‘is still unshaken. I will submit my side of the case to his judgment and decision.’ Mr. Smith was now pleasant and genial, and in this state asked me if I would do him a favour. ‘Certainly,’ I replied, ‘what shall it be?’ ‘Write a line to brother Noyes, saying that you cherish no unkind personal feelings towards me.’ I complied with the request. He was then ready

for the journey, at the same time inviting me to row him across the Creek. I did so, and on leaving the boat he wished me to give him a parting kiss, as a token of my kind regards. With this request I also complied. Not until I had returned to the house, however, and reported to Mrs. Cragin this last diplomatic manoeuvre, did I divine the motive by which he was actuated in thus suddenly making love to me. He was aware that Lyvere had been sent on to Putney as a witness against him. So, lawyer-like, he was going fully prepared, as he thought, to rebut Lyvere's testimony, by proving that he had parted with me on the best of terms. I must admit that I felt a little chagrined to think I could allow myself to be so easily imposed upon after all that had transpired. However, I did not allow such trickery on his part to disturb me seriously, believing as I did that Mr. Noyes possessed the discernment which would enable him to detect the spirit of imposition that would soon confront him."

CHAPTER XX.

PEACE.

GEORGE CRAGIN did not see the face of the Rev. Abram C. Smith again for many years. Noyes told his once disciple that he was no better than a rogue, whom he felt it a duty to denounce before all the world. Smith saw and confessed his error ; promised to sin no more ; returned to Rondout ; asked his angry wife to come home ; and devoted his energies to making money, in which he succeeded better than in making love.

Cragin says of him in parting,—

“He was a man of strong social affections. With his first wife he lived peaceably, and was a kind husband ; but her affectional nature, as compared with his own, was icy coldness. Not finding, therefore, the satisfaction his ardent nature craved in his own family, he gathered up what crumbs he could find, to meet the demands of special friendship, in the field of his labours as a Me-

thodist preacher. So that, according to his own confessions, he was much more at home in the church meetings, *which were mostly made up of females, than in his own family circle.* With his second wife, a still greater disappointment afflicted him. There was in her no lack of sensuous life, but a total lack of religious faith and moral integrity, to sanctify it. Hence, in his domestic and social relations thus far, he had not realised his dreams of connubial felicity. But in forming an acquaintance with Mrs. Cragin, he found a woman whose nature was pre-eminently affectional. With large veneration for God and man, but with little or no cautiousness, and very unselfish, she soon became all the world, and heaven beside, to Mr. Smith. In defending his late conduct, Mr. Smith based his argument on the the fanatical assumption that the invisible powers, with whom he claimed to be in constant communication, had given him Mrs. Cragin as his true affinity—*his spiritual wife and companion, to be his in all ages to come,* alleging that the two previous ones were not adapted to his spiritual needs, or, in other words, were not, either of them, his true mate. The invisible power who thus promised him a choice bit of property, was

undoubtedly the same infamous and unscrupulous speculator who held out very tempting prizes to the Son of God. If Mr. Smith's delusion on this subject, originated anywhere outside of his morbid social affections, it is to be attributed to the social influences of the nominal church, or to the habits of the clerical class of which he had been a member, in being associated so much as they are with women, as their special co-labourers in the religious field."

Husband and wife, now come into their new relation of pious brother and pious sister, had to face the world once more; they had been cured of their idolatrous love for each other; but they had not yet become free of the question as to how they were to gain their daily bread.


"Mr. Smith having left for Vermont, as before stated, the question now came home to me with serious emphasis, What is the will of God concerning my future course? To learn that will and obey it, at the cost of any temporal discomforts and sacrifices, was my duty, and should be my pleasure. After waiting on God awhile, as a man waits on a friend who he is assured has the means and the disposition to relieve him, some flashes of light entered my mind; and this light gradually

increased, until I interpreted its meaning so clearly and satisfactorily that I could not do otherwise than accept it as the will of my heavenly Father concerning the first step to be taken in the premises. I said to Mrs. Cragin, 'My mind is made up to leave this place, just as soon as I can arrange my business to do so, and without waiting for the return of Mr. Smith.'

" 'But where can we go?' inquired my wife.

" 'The light came from the East,' I replied; 'so I am going first to New York. When there, I shall expect directions where to go next. Sufficient unto the day are the directions thereof.'

" Mrs. Cragin was almost overjoyed at the purpose I had formed. The first thing to be done was to find an opening for the disposal of our furniture, most of which was mahogany, and more costly than labouring people could afford to purchase. Our nearest neighbour on that side of the Creek was a Dutch farmer in fair circumstances. I went at once to his house and reported my business. He had unmarried daughters. The entire family returned with me to examine the goods, and the result was, I sold them every piece of furniture I had to dispose of, at prices that pleased them. The love of money was not a vice that I was guilty



of just then. The crops I had cultivated, and of which I was somewhat proud—this being my first attempt at farming since my boyhood days—I left of course. In less than a week, therefore, from the time that I regarded myself as having received orders to remove from that station, I had settled up all business matters for which I was responsible, had my goods that we were to take with us all packed, and taken over the Creek to a steamer lying at Rondout wharf; and on the second day of September, 1840, we took our leave of our friends at the old stone house, and were ferried across the river to the boat bound for New York.”

Peace returned in time to the bosom of this distracted house. In a few days, Mary was able to write in her defence to Father Noyes :

“Since the fatal charm has been dissolved, I see how I have been deceived and duped, and taught to believe that I was in an inner circle where it was right and pleasing to God to do what I did. . . . I never, in my heart, turned aside from the promise I made to you when you were at our house last spring. Again and again I asked Mr. Smith if you would be pleased with our course (for I had terrible misgivings), when he assured me that you would, and that he himself would tell

you . . . Guilty as I am, I have been miserably deceived and deluded by him. I am reaping the curse of trusting in man, and I deserve it. It was the instruction I received to lie and deceive, that first began to open my eyes. I thank God for the judgment that has overtaken me, and is compelling me to see my errors, and making me, from my innermost soul, condemn them, even if I am to be sent to hell at last."

George adds by way of final moral:—

"To sum up our experience during this time, I might say that for the previous six months we had been given over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, having been put into a sort of purgatory, or devil's-cure process, for purging us of egotism and self-conceit. Being thus greatly reduced as regarded self-valuation, we filled a much smaller place in the world, after emerging from that satanic bath, than ever before, making us much more teachable and available to the powers above us and for whom we were created, than we otherwise could have been."

Subsequently husband and wife entered, as brother and sister in the Lord, very heartily into the communistic experiment in Oneida Creek, of which Mary Cragin very soon became the vital soul.

Some years later still, she was drowned by a boat accident in that very Rondout Creek which had been the scene of her trials as Spiritual wife to the Rev. Abram C. Smith.


Many of her writings on religious subjects have been published ; and an obelisk has been raised above her tomb.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOYES ON SPIRITUAL LOVE.

By way of final gloss upon these spiritual doings in the New Pauline Churches of America, I shall cite, from a letter addressed to me by Father Noyes, the following facts, reasonings, and conclusions, as to what he insists on calling the marriage revolution in his own country, now being effected through a change in its religious spirit. It will be noted that Father Noyes considers this coming revolution as a change from democracy to theocracy ; from government by a mob to government by a priest ; from the theory of free trade and personal interest into that of free love and brotherly helpfulness ; from the practice of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, into actual Christian socialism ; a change, therefore, which is to transform the political as well as the domestic life of his countrymen !

In a few places I have altered a word, and



even struck out a phrase, since the ordinary English reader is far less free in the use of terms than an American divine ; but I have in no case changed the sense, or even veiled the meaning meant to be conveyed by the reverend gentleman.

“ Oneida C., March 1867.

“ It is evident from what we have seen that Revivals breed social revolutions. All the social irregularities reported in the papers followed in the train of revivals ; and, so far as I know, all revivals have developed tendencies to such irregularities. The philosophy of the matter seems to be this : Revivals are theocratic in their very nature ; they introduce God into human affairs ; the power that is supposed to be present in them is equivalent to inspiration and the power of miracles,—that is to say, it is the actual Deity. In the conservative theory of Revivals, this power is restricted to the conversion of souls ; but in actual experience it goes, or tends to go, into all the affairs of life. Revival preachers and Revival converts are necessarily in the incipient stage of a theocratic revolution ; they have in their experience the beginning of a life under the Higher Law ; and if they stop at internal religious changes,

it is because the influence that converted them is suppressed.

“And the theocratic tendency, if it goes beyond religion, naturally runs first into some form of Socialism. Religious love is very near neighbour to sexual love, and they always get mixed in the intimacies and social excitements of Revivals. The next thing a man wants, after he has found the salvation of his soul, is to find his Eve and his Paradise. Hence these wild experiments and terrible disasters.

“From these facts and principles, quite opposite conclusions may be drawn by different persons. A worldly-wise man might say, they show that Revivals are damnable delusions, leading to immorality and disorganisation of society. I should say, they show that Revivals, because they are divine, require for their complement a divine organisation of society, which all who love Revivals and the good of mankind should fearlessly seek to discover and inaugurate.

“The confession of Marquis L. Worden exhibits a set of facts which may be called the *morbid results of Revivals*. By studying these cases, we can trace out minutely the process by which Revivals lead to the evolution of Shakerism. One of the

most interesting chapters in your New America is that in which you give Elder Frederick's view of Revivals as breeders of Shaker Societies. You say :—

“ ‘ The Shakers look upon a Revival as a spiritual cycle,—the end of an epoch,—the birth of a new society. Only in the fervour of a revival, says Elder Frederick, can the elect be drawn to God :—that is to say, in Gentile phrase, drawn into a Shaker settlement. Mount Lebanon sprang from a revival ; Enfield sprang from a revival ; in fact, the Shakers declare that every large revival being the accomplishment of a spiritual cycle, must end in the foundation of a fresh Shaker union.’ ”

“ This is undoubtedly a true account of the genesis of Shakerism. In the narrative of Worden, and in the statement added by myself, you are taken behind the curtain and shown *how* the converts are prepared for the holy Elders. It is easy to see that, if the Shakers had been awake to their advantage in 1835-6, they might have established new societies in Central New York and in Central Massachusetts. Every element of Shakerism was present in the disorders of these burnt districts. The Shaker doctrine of Perfection was there. The Shaker doctrine of the

Leadership of Women was there. Lucina Umphreville was the incipient Mother Ann at the West, and Mary Lincoln at the East. The Shaker doctrine of chastity was there. Lucina openly declared that Ann Lee was right in regard to the true relations of man and woman. The original theory of the Saints, both at the East and the West, was opposed to actual intercourse of the sexes as 'works of the flesh.' They 'bundled,' it is true, but only to prove by trial their power against the flesh; in other words, their triumphant Shakerism. Doctor Gridley, one of the Massachusetts leaders, boasted that 'he could carry a virgin in each hand without the least stir of unholy passion!' At Brimfield, Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown visited Simon Lovett in his room; but they came out of that room in the innocence of Shakerism. If the Elders had been present, and prompt to gather the harvest just when it was ripe, before it passed into prurience and decay, two new societies at least might have been founded. And even in the worst stages of the disorder, Shakerism would have been a welcome refuge from the reactions and tribulations that followed the excitement.

"But the Shakers must not flatter themselves

that their societies are the only births that come of Revivals. Mormonism, doubtless, came out of the same fertile soil. Joe Smith began his career in central New York, among a population that was fermenting with the hope of the Millennium, and at a time when the great National Revival was going forth in its strength. The order of things in this birth was the same that we have seen among the bundling Perfectionists,—first, Religion; then Socialism: Revivals and conversions of souls leading the way to Spiritual Wifehood, and finally to Polygamy. The completion of the sequence in this case seems to have taken two generations of leaders; Joe Smith laid the religious foundations, and Brigham Young has perfected the polygamy.

“The underlying principle here, as everywhere, is that which I started at first:—Revivals are in their nature theocratic; and a theocracy has an inexpugnable tendency to enter the domain of society and revolutionise the relations of man and wife. The resulting new forms of society will differ as the civilisation and inspiration of the revolutionists differ.

“One dominant peculiarity of the Shakers, as also of the Bundling Perfectionists, which deter-

mined their style of socialism, was, in my opinion, the *Leadership of Women*. Man of himself would never have invented Shakerism, and it would have been very difficult to have made him a medium of inspiration for the development of such a system. It is not in his line. But it is exactly adapted to the proclivities of women in a state of independence or ascendancy over man. Love between the sexes has two stages ; the courting stage and the wedded stage. Women are fond of the first stage. Men are fond of the second. Women like to talk about love ; but men want the love itself. Among the Perfectionists the women led the way in the bundling with purposes as chaste as those of the Shakers. For a time they had their way ; but in time the men had their way.

“The course of things may be re-stated thus : Revivals lead to religious love ; religious love excites the passions ; the converts, finding themselves in theocratic liberty, begin to look about for their mates and their paradise. Here begins divergence. If women have the lead, the feminine idea that ordinary wedded love is carnal and unholy rises and becomes a ruling principle. Mating on the Spiritual plan, with all the heights and depths of sentimental love, becomes the order of

the day. Then, if a prudent Mother Ann is at the head of affairs, the sexes are fenced off from each other, and carry on their Platonic intercourse through the grating. But, if a wild Mary Lincoln or Lucina Umphreville is in the ascendant, the presumptuous experiment of bundling is tried; and the end is ruin. On the other hand, if the leaders are men, the theocratic impulse takes the opposite direction, and polygamy in some form is the result. Thus Mormonism is the masculine form, as Shakerism is the feminine form, of the more morbid products of Revivals.

“Our Oneida Socialism, too, is a masculine product of the great Revival. I might take you behind the scenes and show you the genesis of Bible Communism. I shall not be likely to find a more catholic confessor. But the task is too egotistical for me at present; I will only indicate in a general way two or three points of difference between my course and that of the bundling Perfectionists.

“First, understand and remember that from 1834, when the Revival carried me into the confession of Holiness, till 1846, the birth-year of our present community—twelve years—I walked in all the ordinances of the law blameless. I have

told you how near I came to being caught in the scandal at Brimfield in 1835, and how I escaped. This was my nearest, I may say my only, approach to implication in the disorders of that period. I was regularly married in 1838, and the files of papers that I published from that time till 1846 will testify that my face was set as a flint against laxity among the Saints. My dealings with Abram C. Smith, in his affair with Mrs. Cragin, is a specimen of the spirit in which I acted. I repeat that I never knew woman till I was married, and I never knew any woman but my wife till we together entered into complex marriage in 1846.

“What then had I to do with the social revolutions that were going on in that turbulent time? I was a leader among Perfectionists. Is it possible, it may be asked, that I was an innocent cipher in these matters all through that campaign? Not exactly a cipher. This is what I did: I looked on; I studied; I got the germ of my present theory of Socialism very soon after I confessed Holiness, *i.e.* in May 1834. As that germ grew in my mind, I talked about it. It took definite form in a private letter in 1836. It got into print without my knowledge or consent in 1837. I

moulded it, protected it, and matured it from year to year; holding it always, nevertheless, as a theory to be realised in the *future*, and warning all men against premature action upon it. I made ready for the realisation of it by clearing the field in which I worked of all libertinism, and by educating our Putney family in male continence and criticism. When all was ready, in 1846, I launched the theory into practice.

“Enough in this direction. One more general remark:—

“It is notable that all the socialisms that have sprung from revivals have *prospered*. They are utterly opposed to each other; some of them must be false and bad; yet they all make the wilderness blossom around them like the rose. The scientific associations, one and all, go to wreck; but the religious socialisms flourish as though the smiles of Providence were upon them. What is the meaning of this? I interpret it thus: however false and mutually repugnant the religious socialisms may be in their details, they are all based on the *theocratic* principle,—they all recognise the right of religious inspiration to shape society and dictate the form of family life. In this Mormons, Shakers, and Bible-Communists agree. I believe this to be a true

principle and one that is dear to the heavens. For the sake of this principle, it seems to me that the invisible government has favoured even Popery and Mohammedanism; and I expect that this principle and not Republicanism, (the mere power of human Law), will at last triumph in some form here and throughout the world.

“JOHN H. NOYES.”



CHAPTER XXII.

CELESTIAL AFFINITIES.

I HAVE given these words of Father Noyes on the origin of Spiritual wifehood in America, because, since this reverend gentleman is one of the chief founders of Pauline Socialism in that country, his opinions have a certain value in this connexion *as facts*.

I must, however, guard myself against any such inference as that, in my judgment, Father Noyes has given in this statement a complete view of the matter. Like nearly all American divines, he fancies that the doctrine of natural mates, between whom alone there can be true wedlock of the soul, is a growth and property of the Western soil; a product of the highest form of New-England Puritanism, having its root in the stony ground about Plymouth Rock. To such a theory, an historian of the Gothic family would certainly demur; whether the origin of

Spiritual wives were traced to Sydney Rigdon, Hiram Sheldon, or John H. Noyes. In the United States, this doctrine of spirit-brides has found an open field and a multitude of converts; and it enjoys in that republic the advantages of a free pulpit and a free press. No rationalistic Ober-Präsident could silence a New York Ebel; no trimming bishop could remove a Massachusetts Prince. In America, the preachers find an open field, if they find no favour; hence the quick and wide success which may greet a new and seductive doctrine like that of Spiritual wives. But this doctrine crossed the seas from Europe to America; and although it can hardly boast of such grand results in Germany and in England as it shows in both the religious circles and the rationalistic societies of the United States, yet some traces of its presence may be found in our day, in every country peopled by men of Teutonic race.

The doctrine of Natural Mates and Spiritual Love between the sexes is an old Gothic doctrine; one which published itself in the great Fraternity of the Free Spirit; which startled mankind in the conduct of John of Leyden; which appeared in the sermons and the practices of Ann Lee; which took

a special form in the speculations of Emmanuel Swedenborg ; which found a voice in the artistic work of Wolfgang von Göthe. This doctrine was known in Augsburg and Leyden, in Manchester and Stockholm, in Frankfort and Weimar, long before it was heard of in New Haven and New York.

From the days in which those Brethren of the Free Spirit tendered to their sisters in the Lord the seraphic kiss of Spiritual love, until our own times, when that soft and perilous privilege was revived in many distant places ; first, by the Mucker at Königsberg, then by the Princeites at Weymouth, afterwards by the Pauline socialists of Brimfield and Manlius ; a constant tradition of the superior rights and felicities conferred by a marriage of souls, has been preserved among the Gothic nations. This tradition has proved its existence in many ways ; sometimes cropping out in theory, sometimes in practice ; here breaking out into license with Hans Matthieson, there dreaming off into fantasy with Jacob Böhme. Under John of Leyden it took the shape of polygamy ; under Gerhard Tersteegen that of personal union with the Holy Ghost. Swedenborg gave it to a large extension, a definite form,

and even a body of rules. Ann Lee made use of it in her project for introducing a female Messiah, and establishing on the new earth her dogma of the leadership of woman. Göthe, who seized so much of the finer spirit of his race, made this old tradition of Natural mates assist, if not the ends of his philosophy, at least the purposes of his art.

Now, the forms into which this old Gothic instinct has thrown itself in our own day, are mainly two; one Spiritual, the other Natural; the first finding its best expression in Swedenborg, the other in Göthe. Under each of these two forms, we have a series of schools and churches springing up in the New America, putting sentiment to the proof, and turning dreams into facts; here running into plurality of wives, there into denial of the passions, and here again into the wildest license of free love.

The preachers of all these modes of Spiritual marriage, profess (with some exceptions, hardly worth a note) to find the sanctions of their creed and practice in St. Paul; for while our orthodox divines have been weakly shutting their eyes on that passage in which the Apostle speaks of his female companion, the free critics of America have

been fastening their own interpretation on his words. Yet the texts on which the two main schools have severally built their systems of religious and social life, may be found much nearer home than in the writings of St. Paul.

The Spiritualistic doctrine lies in Swedenborg ; the Naturalistic doctrine lies in Göthe.

In the new heaven and the new earth imagined by Swedenborg, and painted by him with so much sensuous colour and voluptuous language, the union of male and female is not only a Spiritual fact, but the soul and motive of all celestial facts. Without perfect marriage, there is no perfect rest for either man or woman, even in heaven ; nothing but a striving of the soul after distant joys ; joys which can never be attained, except by the happy blending of two souls in one everlasting covenant of love. Heaven itself is nothing without love ; less than a land without moisture, a field without seed, a world without sunshine. Love is its light and life. Take away love, and heaven is a blank, a waste, a ruin ; for love is the inner soul and source of things ; which sends its radiance through the world of spirits, much as the sun sends forth its heat and light through the world of sense. So firmly is this doctrine of the need of a true

marriage of souls in heaven held by Swedenborg, and by those who follow him, that they represent the happy man and wife, who have loved each other well on earth, and come together in the after life, in perfect innocence and ardour, as melting, so to speak, into each other's essence ; so that these blending souls are no longer visible as two angels, but only as one angel ; a glorified and perfect being which appears in both the masculine and the feminine form. Nay, so potent is the force of love, that the followers of the Swedish seer maintain, not as a paradox, but a high Spiritual truth, that the true husband and wife, thus happily conjoined, are not only known to others as one angel only ; but appear to themselves as a single being ; two in one, a consummate man, unity in the spirit and in the flesh. Such experience, the mystics say, is rare on earth, only because perfect love, the result of marriage between natural mates, is rare.

It is alleged by these mystics that, in the present earthly life, marriages are seldom made from Spiritual motives. Men are tempted into marriage, more by birth, wealth, beauty, high connexions, even opportunity, than by actual prompting of the spirit. Men take wives as they take partners in business, colleagues in politics. Love

is treated as a trade. Even under such bad conditions, many persons go through the matter with a decent air ; for, though they soon find reason to feel that they are not united with their partners in the spirit, they think it well to hide their sorrow, and to live in seeming comfort for the sake of others—of their kindred, of their children, of the world. If they cannot hide their misery from themselves, they often succeed in hiding it from their prying friends. This sort of tender and poetic deceit is useful and even excellent ; since, without it, the peace of families would be continually disturbed. But it is not the less a grief to those who practise it ; and happy are they who have no need to pretend a satisfaction in wedlock which they do not feel !

Those only, adds the seer, who find themselves truly mated on the earth, have done for ever with these trials and contentions of the spirit.

Spirits may pass away from earth to heaven under three different relations of sex and sex. They may pass away as children, in the virgin state ; they may pass away as men and women who have been lawfully married without being spiritually mated ; and they may pass away as husbands and wives who have attained to that stage

of consummate man, in which the male and female has become one body and one soul. In each of these three relations, the spirit has an experience all its own.

“I have heard from angels,” says Swedenborg, “that when a pair who have been educated in heaven from childhood, have come into years, they meet in some place by chance. When they behold each other, they feel by a common instinct that they are a pair. The youth says in his secret heart, She is mine; the damsel says in her secret heart, He is mine. They accost each other, they are happy, and betrothed.”

Nearly all the contracts made on earth, says the Swede, are null and void from the beginning, because these unions are not made with natural pairs. When the man and the woman die, he says, they become consorts for a while in the land of souls, until they find that they are not of kin. Sometimes, in that upper world, the husband quits his wife, sometimes the wife quits her husband; now and then they start from each other, like opposite currents in a magnetic coil. What had made this male and female one in name? Perhaps they lived in the same town; their families were associates; they were of corresponding age, sex,

fortune ; the man was rich, the woman lovely. Tish ! cries the sage ; what are these vanities to the Lord ? After death, externals count for nothing. In the higher spheres no one is richer than another, for every soul is heir to an unfading crown ; no one stands nearer than his fellow, for space is a thing unknown ; no one is of higher birth than the rest, for every soul is a son of God.

In the after-life every one has to seek out his mate, make himself known to her by signs, and enter upon that bliss which crowns his final search.

Happiest of all is he who shall have found and won his natural mate on earth. For him the joys of heaven have come in his mortal days. God's purposes are then wrought out in the living flesh, and nothing in the scheme of his existence runs to waste. Are there many such perfect unions of soul with soul, of heart with heart ? Yea, many ; for God is bountiful to His children, and their perfect bliss may be noted by the discerning eye.

The signs by which you may know a Spiritual pair on earth are mainly these three : union from an early time in youth ; perfect love and

unbroken faith towards each other; constant prayer that the Lord will make them and preserve them one in body and in soul. When such perfect lovers pass away into a higher state, they will come together by a cogent law; and the external garments being cast aside, they enter gladly into that stage of their spiritual progress in which husband and wife can part no more; in which they will exist as a single being—one angel of both the male and female type.

That matches are made in heaven is not a pleasantry with the Swedish seer. The Lord, he says, provides similitudes for all—if not on earth, where things so often arrange themselves by chance, why then in heaven, where everything comes to pass according to eternal laws, not in obedience to the caprice of men and women. Nature exists in pairs, and God has given all creatures into life, as either male or female, one for each—no more, no less. In paradise there was one woman, one man. The perfect being, into whose nostrils had been breathed the breath of life, was parted into two halves; this half male, that half female; one original, one derived; each necessary to the other, part of the other; so that the two beings which had been separated might

be considered as having a common life. As in the lower Eden so in the higher Eden. In heaven there will be no bachelors, no old maids, no monks, no nuns, no pluralists, no celibates, no free lovers. Each Adam lives in his Eve, and is content in her,—

He for God only, she for God in him.

Thus, all the spirits of the just, whatever may have been their lot on earth, will meet and wed their proper counterparts in heaven. God has provided that for every male soul a female soul shall be born, and heaven itself knows no sweeter delight than springs from witnessing these reunions of the blest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NATURAL AFFINITIES.

GÖTHER has dealt with these Gothic instincts and traditions in a purely scientific spirit; though he has used them mainly for the purposes of romantic art. From him, in the main, the Free-lovers appear to have derived both their philosophy and their terms. Was the word "affinity" ever used before his time for a natural mate?

Göthe appears to have had a strong belief in the existence of some law of male and female friendship and kinship higher than our actual marriage would in every case now imply. Two of his early tales, *Werther's Burthen* and *Free Affinities*, were undertaken by him in order that he might work out his ideas on this point, under forms of social life and personal genius properly adapted to the end which he kept in view.

In both these stories, it is clear that Göthe sides with the hero who is straining out his life against the conventional proprieties and moralities

of his time ; whence a dull and ignorant cry has been raised against these noble works of art as dangerous reading for the young ; as if dull and ignorant people, wanting insight and imagination, would not find the highest literature of every land, be it profane or be it sacred—the work of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes—the Bible, the Talmud, the Vedas, the Koran—to be dangerous reading for the young !

In the first of these stories, Werther finds, too soon for his peace on earth, not too soon for his hope in heaven, that Charlotte is his free affinity ; that he and she are natural pairs, born for each other, and parted by the accidents of time and place. The great discovery is only made on the eve of Charlotte's espousals with Albert ; and thus the struggle of two souls for a union which can never be brought about on earth makes up the drama. Werther dies at last in a confident belief that Charlotte is his natural mate, and that by the law of their common organization she will rejoin him in the skies.

In the second story (*Wahl Vervandt-Schaften*) the same ideas are dealt with in what appears to be a more material spirit. Nature supplies the bases, science the illustrations of Free Affinities ;

a tale which begins with a discourse on chemistry, and ends in the tragic peace of death.

Göthe appears to have been pondering Plato's fancy of the split men.

With a dry sense of fun, which in its own grave style has never been excelled, except, perhaps, in the writings of his rival, Francis Bacon, Plato describes in the Banquet how the human race became originally split into male and female. In the good old times, before men grew wicked in their thoughts, and heaven became alarmed for its own safety, there was no such thing known in the world as sex. Every living man was male and female; perfect in form, in faculty, in spirit. The form in which he dwelt was a round ball of flesh, having four hands, four feet, two faces, and one brain. Every perfect thing, it is said by Göthe, in passing, has the spherical form, from the sun and stars down to a drop of water. Angles are defects, and to round one's life is but a way of making it lovely. In the sexless period, man, being a ball of flesh, was a creature of inconceivable strength and swiftness. He could fell an ox, outrun a race-horse. When he wished to move quickly, he thrust out his four arms and legs, and rolled along the road like a wheel with eight

spokes which had lost its tire. But these strong men, of no sex in particular, grew proud before the faces of the gods ; so that, like Otus and Ephialtus, they made an attempt to scale the spheres, and cast the immortals from their thrones. Zeus, in his anger, shot his bolts ; cleaving them through the head downwards ; parting each round wheel of flesh into two halves ; separating the male side from the female side. Great was the agony and loss of power ; the pain of cutting the two sides asunder was intense ; and man, shorn of his rotundity, could no longer wrestle with the lion and outspeed the elk. Each part of the man had now to stand on two legs,—a feat of much skill, the art of which he was slow to learn and swift to lose. On his four legs he could either walk or run, sleep or wake, play or rest. On his two legs, he could neither roll nor sleep ; neither could he stand very long nor walk very far. All his movements became slow and painful. Every step which he took only proved to him his loss of power, and that the gods had laid upon his sin a burden difficult to be borne.

But this daily misery of the flesh was not the worst. Besides having to pass his life in trying to stand on two legs, man found that he was

parted from his female counterpart; whom he called, in the idiom of grief, his better half and his dearer self. When the daring rotundities were cleft in twain, the parts were scattered by celestial wrath. Each wounded fragment sought its fellow in the crowd, but the gods took care that much of the search should be made in vain. This last blow broke man's spirit. Alone in the world, and perched on two legs, what could he do? Once, indeed—for the very worm on which you tread may turn—he felt tempted in his pain to cry out against Zeus; but the king of gods rose up in his wrath and said, that if man would not keep quiet on these green fields of earth, but would storm up against the stars, he should be slit once more from the crown downwards, so that in future he should have to stand on a single leg. Man heard these words with a whitened face; and Zeus was not provoked into a second essay with his bolts.

All that was now left to man in his split condition, beyond the acute remembrance of his former bliss, was a yearning hope of being one day able to rejoin his second self. Every man became a seeker. The god, when parting men into halves, had torn the fragments from each other,

and cast the pieces into chaos. Only a happy few could find their mates. Most men had to seek them long, and myriads never found them in the flesh at all. Strangers came together in the press, and for a little while imagined they were pairs ; but time detected incongruities of soul, and then the wearied spirits flew from each other in a rage. When, in the rare happiness of its search, a man fell in with his natural mate, a true marriage of the spirit instantly took place. To this great desire of the severed parts for union, Plato says, has been given the name of Love.

And so, adds the sage, by way of moral, let us take care not to offend the gods, lest we get our noses slit down, and have to stand in future on one leg.

Göthe, though he may have taken his hint from Plato, treated his theory of natural mates in his own way ; which was that of material science.

Eduard and Captain Otto are seated in the old Schloss, reading a book of science, when Lotté, Eduard's lovely wife, breaks in upon them.

"You were reading something about affinities ; I thought of two kinsfolk of mine, who are occupying my thoughts just now ; but, on turning to the book, I see it is not about living things."

"It is only about earths and ores," answered Eduard.

"Would you mind telling me what is meant by affinities?" asked the lady of Captain Otto.

"If you will let me," says the Captain, and begins:

"We see that all natural objects have a certain relation to themselves.

"We can make it clear to her, and to ourselves," breaks in Eduard, "by examples. Take water, oil, mercury, in each you see a certain unity, a connexion of parts, which is never lost, except through forces acting from without; remove the force, and the parts become one again."

"That is clear to me," ponders Lotté; "rain-drops run into streams, and globules of quicksilver part and melt into each other; and I see that as everything has reference to itself, so it must have to other things."

"True," adds the Captain; "and the nature of the relation depends on the things; which may run together freely like old friends, or lie as strangers side by side: those blending easily, like wine and water; these resisting every attempt to unite them, like oil and water."

"How like some people that one knows!" exclaims Lotté.

"But there are third parties in nature," says her husband, "by the aid of which, those hostile elements may be induced to combine."

"Yes," continues Otto, "by the help of an alkali, we can persuade water to combine with oil."

"Is not this power the thing you mean by an affinity?" asks the lady.

"True," says Captain Otto, getting on to perilous ground with his fair hearer; "such natures as, on coming near, lay hold of each other, and modify each other, we call affinities. The alkalies seek the acids, and form in combination a new substance. Lime, you know, has the strongest ardour for all kinds of acids, and if you give it a chance, will be swift to combine with them."

"It seems to me," says Lotté, pondering, "that these things are related to each other, not in the blood, so to speak, so much as in the spirit."

"You have not heard the best," adds her husband; "those affinities which bring about separations are of higher interest than the others."

"Take the case," says Otto, "of limestone; a more or less pure calcareous earth, in union with a very delicate acid. If we put this bit of stone into

weak sulphuric acid, what have we? The lime enters into union with the sulphuric acid and becomes gypsum; the delicate acid escaped into the air. This is a case of Free Affinity."

Every reader of Göthe knows how the story runs from chemistry into love; Captain Otto coming in, like the sulphuric acid, as a separating agent between Eduard and his charming wife; Eduard finding his own free affinity in Fräulein Ottilie; and the four friends who love and respect each other making shipwreck of their lives: until the two hapless victims of a conventional morality are laid side by side in the chapel, where they find peace and rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCHOOL OF OWEN.

It is an odd fact in the history of this social development, that the scientific phase of Free Affinities, which in Europe came up later than the Spiritual phase of eternal brides, should have been the first to establish its empire in the United States.

This scientific phase of Free Affinities came in with Robert Owen, and may be said to have taken root in the soil under the skilful planting of his son, Robert Dale Owen, and that son's fellow-worker, Frances Wright. To the socialism taught by these preachers, may be traced the various schools of Free Love which are now found flourishing in Boston and New York.

About the time when Archdeacon Ebel was preparing his marriage-feast for the Lamb in Königsberg, Robert Owen, of New Lanark fame, was crossing the Atlantic Ocean from Liverpool,

with a view to bringing his scheme for the regeneration of society under notice of the President and people of the United States. Strong in his faith, Owen appeared in Washington as the author of a new science of life. The President was polite, the people curious. Some good men and more good women, felt their hearts expand towards his dream of a new Eden in the far west ; a paradise in which he told them there would be no longer any war and crime, because there would be no longer any soldiers and police. The great family of man was to be governed in future by the law of love. Owen's two watchwords, Harmony and Association, passed from lip to lip, from page to page, through a thousand organs of the pulpit and the press, until a host of eager reformers had more than half persuaded themselves that the world could be saved by a phrase.

When Owen proposed to buy up the town of New Harmony, founded in the wilds of Indiana by Frederick Rapp as a German religious community, he found many friends in Boston and New York ready to assist him in the enterprise. The Rappites, having failed as a trading society, were induced to sell their vineyards, farms and shanties on the Wabash river ; and a strong troop

of scientific socialists marched upon the ground pledged to repair a disaster which Owen had felt no scruple in describing as the necessary consequence of trying to carry on human society in a religious spirit.

The Lanark reformer made no secret of his own unbelief; in fact, he spoke of the Bible as a baneful book; yet he was received by the churches, even by those in Puritan New England, with a measure of silence and respect. He was not a man on whom it would have been wise to make open war. His fame was great, his aims were lofty, and his life was pure. He had come to offer a free people his gift of a new science; and the old conservative churches, wise in their reserve and silence, had only to leave the enthusiast and his friends alone. Many who would not have listened to Owen's philosophical heresies, were anxious that his scheme of fraternal co-operation should be fairly tried; and it was only through the failure of his plans at New Harmony in Indiana, followed by the similar failures of New Orbiston in Lanarkshire, and Tytherly in Hants, that he passed away, after some years, into the dreary list of false pretenders to a mastery over the secret resources of social art.

In the speeches of Robert Owen there was no direct assault on marriage as an institution ; but the attack was scarcely veiled ; since the very first conception of a socialistic state is such a relation of the sexes as shall prevent men and women from falling into selfish family groups. Family life is eternally at war with social life. When you have a private household, you must have personal property to feed it ; hence a community of goods—the first idea of a social state—has been found in every case to imply a community of children and to promote a community of wives. That you cannot have socialism without introducing communism, is the teaching of all experience, whether the trials have been made on a large scale or on a small scale, in the old world or in the new. All the Pentecostal and Universal Churches have begun their career with a strong disposition towards that fraternal state in which private property is unknown ; some have travelled along that line, adopting all the conclusions to which the journey led them ; while others have turned back in alarm on seeing that the fraternal theory was at war with all the sacred traditions of home.

The Shakers founded their societies on the ruins of family life. The Mormons, in order to


save their family life, have been forced to give up their inclination towards a common property in the Lord. The Princeites of Spaxton have to renounce their old ways of thinking when they place their feet in the Abode of Love. The Bible Communists found their logical term in the doctrine, which they adopted, of a common right in goods and wives. All the social reformers who have striven to reconcile the family group with the general fund have failed ; though some of these reformers, like the pioneers at Brook Farm, were men of consummate abilities and unselfish aims.

For a long time this result of Owen's system lay hid ; a thing latent and unnoticed ; it was only when the theory came into contact with realities that men saw how far the people who rushed into these new Edens were driven into the assumption of fresh relations with each other, beyond what the law allowed.

Dale Owen (the son of Robert Owen) and his female companion, Frances Wright, threw off the mask which had been worn by their party, and in the memorable tour which they made through the United States, as champions of a new order, they boldly put the Bible, and all that has been founded on its teaching, under ban and curse ; and in the

place of these old-world theories, advocated their two great doctrines of Free Love and Free Divorce.

Dale Owen, who settled in America, soon became one of its leading citizens ; filling high offices, both at home and abroad—magistrate, representative, senator, ambassador—until, by his eloquence, his sagacity, and his daring, he has come to occupy a position which is unknown to the law, and is described, even by men who hate him, as that of Privy Councillor to the republic. Dale Owen was the soul of the democratic party, while that party had a real life of its own. When he parted from it, as he did on the questions of negro freedom and of female suffrage, the party splintered off into a dozen fragments—war democrats, peace democrats, copperheads, Vallandighamites, dead-beats, Copper-Johnsons, and the like. On every point of policy, Dale Owen stands in the front ; so far in front that sober men, lagging far behind him in the march, are apt to think he is always standing on the verge of chaos. This Privy Councillor of the republic pleads for every sort of equality ; that of husband and wife, that of Negro and Saxon, that of earth and heaven. To him a man is a man, whether he be male or female, white or black ; and being a gentleman of fine



presence, of noble culture, and of great intellectual power, he has the art of quickly persuading men to accept his doctrines.

But the work which is most of all his own—the fruit of his own spirit—was that which he achieved in company with Frances Wright.

This clever and excitable woman had been stung into frenzy by what she fancied were two great discoveries of her own ; first, that the earth is over-peopled ; and second, that the law of marriage, now enforced by the church, makes every woman who adopts it a slave. She found it was her mission to make known these truths, and being a charming speaker, as well as a strong writer, she chose to make them known from both the platform and the press. She was not, however, a preacher of despair. Bad as things were, she saw her way to a cure for all the evils under which the world then groaned. The number of mouths to be fed must be reduced ; and woman must be freed from her bridal bonds.

In England, her native country, where she first made public her discoveries, people laughed at her ; they had heard female lecturers before her day, and did not like them ; nay, they had heard these very things proclaimed and illustrated by

men and women of far higher genius than Frances Wright. The female reformer would have gone back to her knitting in despair, had she not fallen in with a true mate of her own belief in Dale Owen, who was then about to leave his country for what he thought was a new and better world. Female teachers were not then a drug on the American soil; and Dale Owen proposed that the eloquent rhapsodist should go with him to the United States. She went, and she enjoyed a great success. In the republic every one was free. She brought out a paper, called *The Free Enquirer*; she announced courses of lectures on liberty in marriage and divorce; when the shop-women of Broadway, and the ladies of Fifth Avenue, ran to hear their husbands denounced as tyrants, and their wedding-rings described as chains. In that country no state-church could frown upon her; no society could put a stigma on her brow. She was free to teach and to preach, to reason and to write. All these things she did in a way to shock the more pious and conservative minds; yet with so much art that neither she, nor her male adviser, was ever treated to the rough injustice by which public opinion in America sometimes supplies the defects of law. Dale Owen

and Frances Wright were neither tarred and feathered, nor set upon a rail, as had been done with the Rev. Charles Mead and the Rev. John B. Foot. In the northern cities, most of all in New York, they began to found a school of reformers, bent on slackening the bonds of marriage ; first, by acting on public opinion through the press ; afterwards by proposing measures of redress for injured wives in the local legislative bodies.

The partners in this crusade against family life divided the field of attack between them : Dale taking the population question, Frances the marriage question. Dale Owen wrote a book, called *Moral Physiology*, in which he proposed a new theory for limiting the number of mouths to be fed. It was a daring book, and many pious people denounced it as the spawn of hell ; but the abuse of men who were known for their old-fashioned virtues only helped it into wider notice. More than by any other class, it is said to have been read and pondered by the clergy. I have reason to think it suggested the vagaries of the Rev. Theophilus Gates ; and I happen to know that it gave the first hint of his system to Father Noyes.

CHAPTER XXV.

SCHOOL OF FOURIER.

WHILE Dale Owen and Frances Wright were sowing their seed of scientific socialism through the land, Albert Brisbane arrived in New York with a gospel of social progress in his hand, which affected to reconcile the two hostile principles of association and personal property, and both these principles with the more sacred dogma of family life. Brisbane, a man of high character and remarkable powers, had made a journey to Paris, in order to study in the best quarters the new system of society proposed by Charles Fourier.

In his own country, Fourier was as great a failure as Robert Owen had been in England. But, besides this fact of failure, there was so much of like nature in the lives and in the systems of these two men, that one could almost write a history of one in the other's name. Owen and Fourier were born within a year of each other ;

they sprang from the trading classes ; and the only education they received was such as fit men for the counting-house and the exchange. They both engaged in business, and failed in it. They were both induced to study the present state of society by noticing the difficulties which men find in the way of exchanging what they have for what they need. Full of this idea, they went up from the country to the capital : in Owen's case to London ; in Fourier's case to Paris. Each had the good fortune to find one royal and illustrious friend—Owen in the Duke of Kent, Fourier in Charles the Tenth. Each was able to surround himself with a number of eager and obscure disciples, who seized his doctrine with applause, and strove to explain it to the world. For these regenerators of mankind were equally wanting in power of expression and equally poor in literary art. Young men and women went about preaching their doctrines—Mrs. Frances Wright explaining the system of Owen in England, while Madame Clarisse Vigoreux was doing the same service for Fourier in France. Each saw newspapers born and buried in his cause ; each outlived his name and fame in Europe ; and each was destined, through disciples, to achieve

results in the New World which he had been unable to secure in the Old.

Like Robert Owen, the French reformer was wholly ignorant of modern science. When he arrived in Paris he was received by the learned men with scorn, and by the witty men with jokes and laughter. The blunders in his books are almost beyond belief; for, like his female followers, Eliza Farnham and Elizabeth Denton, he had got his facts about the universe from visions of the night. Thus he told his disciples that the stars and planets are living beings, like men and women, with the same passions and desires, the same hunger and thirst, the same fear and anger; that the stars make love to each other, come together in bridal pairs, and send their offspring out as colonists into space; that sun, moon, and planets, each in turn, has had a part in creating what we see of earth; the Sun having called into being on its bosom the elephant, the diamond, and the oak; Jupiter, the cow, the topaz, and the jonquil; Saturn, the horse, the ruby, and the lily; while the Earth produced, by a kind of spontaneous generation, the dog, the violet, and the opal. He told his wondering disciples that the infant is at birth a mere animal, like a tadpole,

and has a soul given to it only with its teeth : that this soul is subject to two sorts of immortality—one simple, the other unbound ; that men have many lives, of many different kinds, so that in the order of nature there is no preference and injustice ; that kings, queens, beauties, scholars, princes, judges, and all other persons favoured in the present life, were paupers, criminals, and lunatics, in the previous world ; that all those who are now condemned by their birth to a life of pain, hunger, misery, and disgrace, will, in the next stage of existence, live on the brighter side of nature, becoming lovely in person as well as rich in the gifts of genius and of birth. A few months only before Trevethick put his first iron horse upon the road, Fourier, lamenting that man has no easier and swifter way of travelling from Lyons to Paris than by the old French diligence, prophesied that nature would shortly produce some new creatures of the land, the sea, and the air called anti-lions, anti-whales, and anti-condors, which mighty beasts, fishes and birds, should be able, when duly tamed and trained, to draw men along at the miraculous speed of thirty miles an hour !

Fourier died in Paris, in the year 1837, at

the age of fifty-five, exhausted in body and in mind.

Such was the grand reformer of society whom the brilliant Albert Brisbane introduced in 1842 to his countrymen by a series of public lectures in New York. Horace Greeley, of the New York Tribune, opened his pages to the preachers of association on this new French model; meetings were held in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, as well as in New York; and in less than a year from the date of Brisbane's landing in America, the whole country seemed to be a-flame with zeal for this new French gospel. Fourier's own writings were not read, and his ideas were very little known. Public opinion was not in those days strongly opposed to any fair investigation of the problems of social life; but there was in this French writer a cynical disregard for domestic virtue—as English and American men conceive of domestic virtue—which would have jarred unpleasantly on the Puritan mind. Fourier's thoughts were given to the public in very small doses; something was concealed, still more was modified, not a little was denied. Henry J. Raymond, a magnate of the New York press, afterwards so famous as the confidential friend of Abraham

Lincoln, led a fierce attack on this French system ; exposing, with a merciless logic, all its offences against good sense, and showing that life in the phalanx, as conceived by the founder of French socialism was opposed in spirit, if not in fact, to the existing marriage bond. Greeley, though he could not deny that Fourier had contemplated a freedom between the sexes hardly consistent with a high repute for morality, protested that in the phalanx proposed by Brisbane and supported by himself, the original plans of the French theorist had been so far modified as to bring them within the range of American notions of moral right. The fact remained, and in time it became known, that Fourier's system could not be reconciled, any more than Owen's system could be reconciled, with the partition of mankind into those special groups called families, in which people live together, a life devised by nature, under the close relation of husband and wife, of parent and child.

More than one experimental search after what was called the better life had to be made before all the world, including the seekers themselves, were brought to admit the failure of this attempt to combine associated labour with personal property and domestic life. The first in date, and

best in means, was a village at Red Bank, in Monmouth County, New Jersey; for which a number of New York bankers were persuaded to supply the funds. Six hundred acres of land were bought for the company; two hundred of which could be easily brought under plough and spade. The land was not rich; but the dressing which it most required, marl, was found in two large beds on the estate. A stream ran through the property, feeding a pretty lake, and serving to turn a mill. Clumps of trees, and a deep furrow in the ground, made the place naturally picturesque. Five miles of sandy road led to the tidal river, by which there was daily intercourse with New York.

With funds supplied by the bankers, a big house was built, on the model of a Saratoga hostelry; with rooms for a hundred and fifty guests; single rooms for bachelors and maids; double rooms for married folks; and suites of rooms for families. There was a common hall, a dining-room, a dairy, a kitchen, a store-house, and other offices, but no chapel or church.

Into this settlement of Red Bank, which they called the North American Phalanx, a body of reforming zealots, drawn from various classes of

society, including an Episcopalian clergyman and a Unitarian minister, began to move. They laid themselves out for a better and a pleasanter life, and yet with a strict resolution to make their experiment pay.

The first thing to be done at Red Bank was to create a new public opinion on the subject of manual labour ; so that the works which are commonly held in contempt, such as cleaning shoes, milking cows, sweeping floors, and serving the table, should be raised into the highest order of employments. This was not so difficult as it might seem. That which is done by the best, soon comes to be thought the best. A scholar, a clergyman, a banker, were selected to clean the boots and scrub the floors ; the girls were called into a room, and those who were judged to be the loveliest and the cleverest were elected as a great honour to wait upon the company. ‘How did you like the service?’ I asked a lady in New York, who had been a waiter in the Phalanx. ‘Guess, I liked it very much,’ she answered ; ‘in the first place, all the pretty girls were waiters, and no one who thought well of her beauty liked to be left out ; and then we all dined by ourselves afterwards, when the stupid was gone, and we used

to have great fun.' It turned out just the same among the men ; and idle fellows who liked to moon about and smoke, soon came to slip into the laundry and beg, as a favour, from one of the shoe-blacks, permission to polish off a dozen pairs of boots.

Too much is said to have been effected at Red Bank for manual labour, and too little for the higher purposes of life. Religion was put aside as obsolete ; and science, in the name of which these reformers had thrown themselves upon the land, was left untaught. An old French teacher, himself in want of many masters, was set to train the boys and girls in useful knowledge ; but, in truth, they learned nothing from him, not even how to read and write.

All the women at Red Bank wore the short skirt and loose trousers invented by the ladies of Oneida Creek ; and in the eyes of strangers they looked in this attire exceedingly comely and picturesque.

The attempt to found a social state in combination with the family group began to show signs of failure the very instant the settlers reached Red Bank ; though the community did not disperse until they had spent the best part of their share-

holders' capital. Single men complained that they had to work for children who were not their own. Smart young maids perceived that they had to bear the burdens, without sharing in the pleasures, of married women. Folks with small families objected to folks with large ones. What was called the division of profits was seen to be a joke; since in most years there was nothing to divide; and when there chanced to be a surplus in the till, no fair balance could be struck. When the discontent had grown to a sufficient height, the bubble burst, Red Bank was sold to New Jersey farmers, and the reformers of mankind returned with chastened fancies to the humdrum routine of city life.

A still more famous trial in fraternal living, was that poetic picnic, so to say, which was proposed by the Rev. George Ripley, carried out by a number of New England men and women, and used by Hawthorne as the scene of his *Blithedale Romance*. Ripley, a man who combines the finest culture with the highest daring, told me the story of this singular settlement; in which he was assisted, more or less closely, by men no less eminent than Channing, Curtis, Parker, Emerson, Dana, Hawthorne, Dwight, and by a woman no less notable

than Margaret Fuller. A true history of that experiment, in which so many lights of American literature lit their torches, is a pressing want, which it may be hoped that the author of that experiment will some day write.

These young enthusiasts of society were nearly all Cambridge men, members of the Unitarian Church ; and the movement which they commenced at Brook Farm near Boston, was religious, educational, and artistic, as well as social. The men and women who joined it hoped to live a better and purer life than they had done in the great city. They wanted to refine domestic manners, to ennoble manual toil ; and to some extent they achieved these expectations. They did not seek to interfere with marriage ; nay, they guarded that holy state with reverence ; yet the spirit of fraternal association was found to weave itself with infinite subtleties into the most tender relations of man and woman. Fear came into the common dwelling ; and even if this picnic of poets and lovely women had not been a failure on other grounds, the rivalries of Zenobia and Priscilla would unquestionably have sent Brook Farm the way of Red Bank.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FREE LOVE.

THERE is only too much reason to fear that the effect of all this teaching on the part of those who sought after the better life—of Dale Owen and Frances Wright, of Albert Brisbane and Clarisse Vigoreux, of George Ripley and Margaret Fuller—was a vast increase in America of those irregular unions of men and women which, though known in many parts of Europe, are nowhere half so dangerous to public morals as in the United States.

When a man and woman either in France or England dally with the thought of entering into any of these lawless unions, which are known in America as a state of Free Love—unions contracted freely by the parties, but on a clear understanding that they are time-bargains only, made to last either for a fixed term, subject to renewal, or simply for so long a time as the partners please—they know very well that the

world will not be with them, and that they can only live the life they are choosing to adopt under a social ban. In their own hearts, such a man and woman may be able to find excuses for what they do ; they may fancy that they lie under the strain of some special wrong, for which the law can yield them no redress ; and they may feel that social wrong has driven them into setting all social laws aside. But they do not pretend to think that what they are doing is right, and that the world is false and fiendish because it holds up before them the chapters of an immutable moral code by which they stand condemned. The woman who in England claims to be a law unto herself, will yet daily and hourly pray to God that her child may never have to face that question of acting on the individual will.

In the United States it is not so. The great disparity in the two sexes, which in that country makes the female master of every situation, has deprived society of the conservative force engendered by fear and shame. No woman in that country needs to care whether she offends or not. If she is right in her own belief, that is enough ; she is hardly more responsible to her lover than to her groom. Instead of having all society against her, she finds a certain portion of it, and that of

a class distinguished in some degree by art and culture, on her side. Free Love, instead of being universally condemned, has in America its poets, orators, and preachers; its newspapers, lecture-halls, excursions, pic-nics, and colonies—all of which help to give it a certain standing and authority in her eyes.

The poets of Free Love, chiefly females, are numerous, but of no high rank in the diviner arts of song. Their verse is simple, sensuous, natural, with an occasional touch of beauty. Lizzie Doten, Fanny Hyzer, T. N. Harris, and G. S. Burleigh, are the names of four out of a hundred, who have tuned their harps to make music of Free Love. One specimen of this poetry may be welcome. It is a declaration of love, divided into two parts; one part describing the love that will bless the happy pair in free courtship, the second part describing that which will bless them in free union. The sentiment is scientific. First part:

“ FREE LOVE.

“ I will love thee as the flowers love,
That in the summer weather,
Each standing in its own place,
Lean rosy lips together,

And pour their sweet confession
Through a petal's bended palm,
With a breath that only deepens
The azure-lidded calm
Of the heavens bending o'er them,
And the blue-bells hung before them,
All whose odour in the silence is a psalm.

“ I will love thee as the dews love,
In chambers of the lily,
Hung orb-like and unmeeting,
With their flashes bending stilly,
By the white shield of the petals
Held a little way apart ;
While all the air is sweeter,
For the yearning of each heart,—
That yet keep clear and crystal
Their globed spheres celestial,
While to and fro their glimmers ever dart.

“ I will love thee as the stars love,
In sanctity enfolden,
That tune in constellations
Their harps divine and golden,
Across the heavens greeting
Their sisters from afar—
The Pleiades to Mazzaroth,
Star answering to star ;
With a love as high and holy
And apart from all the lowly—
Swaying to thee like the planets, without jar.

“ I will love thee as the spirits love,
Who, free of Earth and Heaven,
Wreath the white and pale-blue flowers
For the brows of the forgiven,
And are dear to one another
For the blessings they bestow
On the weary and the wasted
In our wilderness of woe ;
By thy good name with the angels,
And thy human heart’s evangels,
Shall my love from holy silence to thee go.”

“ FREE MARRIAGE.

“ I will love thee as the cloud loves—
The soft cloud of the summer ;
That winds its pearly arms round
The rosy-tinted comer,
Interwreathing till but one cloud
Hangs dove-like in the blue,
And throws no shadow earthward,
But only nectar dew
For the roses blushing under ;
And, purified from thunder,
Floats onward with the rich light melting through.

“ I will love thee as the rays love,
That quiver down the ether,
That many-hued in solitude,
Are pure white knit together ;

And if the heavens darken,
Yet faint not to despair,
But bend their bow, hope-shafted,
To glorify the air,—
That do their simple duty,
Light-warm with love and beauty,
Not scorning any low plant anywhere.

“ I will love thee as the sweets love,
From dewy rose and lily,
That fold together cloud-like,
On zephyrs riding stilly,
Till charmed bard and lover,
Drunk with the scented gales,
Name one sweet and another,
Not knowing which prevails ;
The wingèd airs caress them,
The hearts of all things bless them :
So will we float in love that never fails.

“ I will love thee as the gods love—
The Father God and Mother,
Whose intermingled Being is
The life of every other,—
One, absolute in Two-ness,
The universal power,
Wedding Love the never-ending,
Through planet, man, and flower ;
Through all our notes shall run this
Indissoluble oneness,
With music ever deepening every hour,”

Captain Otto, Göthe's champion of affinities, would have been content with these physical symbols of a passion which so many of us think divine.

Under the teaching of this sort of song and science, a class of American women has been brought to confound the moral sense so far as to think that it is right for a girl to obey her nature as some of the religious zealots say it is right for man to follow the leading of the Spirit. When one of these emancipated females departs from what the world would call the straight line of her duty, she claims to be following 'the higher law,' and begs mankind to admire her courage and applaud her act. Thus, it happens, that a lady who prefers to live in temporary, rather than in permanent marriage, with the man she loves, does not quietly submit in America to a complete exclusion from society. She asserts a right to think for herself, in the matter of wedlock, as in everything else. Is the moral question, she asks, of higher note than the religious question? In countries like Rome and Spain, she can understand that any departure of either man or woman from the usual rules, should be followed by a social curse; society in such countries being inspired and guided by an infallible church; but in

her own free republic, where the law knows nothing of a church, either fallible or infallible, who has the right to launch a social curse? If a woman is free to make her own terms with God, why should she not be free to make her own terms with man? Is heaven of less account than earth? Indeed, does not the higher liberty involve the lower? Free love is, she thinks, a necessary sequence of free faith. Why, then, in acting on her right, should she suffer a social stigma?

Such are the reasonings and the protests of a host of female preachers and writers; of ladies like Frances Wright, Lizzie Doten, and Corah Hatch.

The number of persons living openly in this kind of free union is believed to be very great; so many that the churches and the law courts have been compelled to recognise their existence. While I was in Ohio a curious case of Free Love occupied public attention. A man and woman professing this principle, had lived together in Cincinnati, made money, reared a family of boys and girls, and then died. They had not been married as the law directs. They had simply gone to their circle, taken each other's word, and

then begun to keep house. No form had been used that could be called a contract. No entry of their pledges had been made. It was simply said in behalf of these children, that the parents had undertaken, in the presence of some other liberal spirits, to live together as long as they liked. On these grounds the children claimed the property left by their parents ; and the court of law, after much consideration of the facts, allowed their claim.

Some anger was excited by a decision which seemed to put the natural right of these children above the legal right. All circles declared the verdict a blow against marriage.

Among the confessions placed in my hands by Americans, is a paper by Mr. B. M. Lawrence, a Free Lover, of Boston, in Massachusetts, from which an extract may be given which will show by an authentic case in what way these irregular unions, called Free Love Bridals, are made :

A FREE LOVE WEDDING.

" Boston, Feb. 1867.

" Having mingled much with the world at large, and with the reformers and spiritualists particu-

larly, and seeing so much of domestic inharmony, my mind was made up never to marry, when a Bible Spiritual Medium came some miles to meet me, sent, she said, like Peter to Cornelius, to testify to me concerning the things of the coming kingdom of heaven; and she told me that the believers must enter in in pairs, and that among the things lacking in my case was a *wife*!—that I must and would soon find *my* mate, and, that until then I would meet with nothing but disappointments; that I would know her soon, as we should meet, etc. Sure enough, troubles came; ‘fightings within, and fears without.’ A great fire at Syracuse burnt up the Journal office, with all our bills, cuts, and stereotype plates. My partner, Mr. C., left me alone; and I concluded to go to a meeting of the Friends of Progress at Stockport, N.Y., and by request, I visited the farm of Mr. R., where the women work out-of-doors, and they have some of the community spirit.

“Here I met with a young music-teacher from Quincy, Massachusetts, by the name of Priscilla Jones; strange as it may appear, I felt that she was to become my wife as soon as I heard her name spoken; and two days later, at the foot of

Niagara's reef of rainbows, baptized by the mists of heaven, we pledged ourselves to unite our destinies, and work together for human welfare, so long as it was mutually agreeable; and the next Sunday at the close of the convention, we publicly promised to live together as husband and wife.

“B. M. L.”

Mr. Lawrence and Miss Jones, pledging each other, and uniting their destinies, under Niagara's reef of rainbows, mean no more by this promise of living as husband and wife, and working together for human welfare, than that he and she will live together so long as the fancy holds them!

The Free Lovers, who have their head-quarters in New York, have various settlements throughout the country, in which their principles are said to reign supreme. The most famous, perhaps, of these settlements, are the villages called Berlin Heights and Modern Times.

Berlin Heights is a village in the State of Ohio, in which bands of Free Lovers have settled so as to be a comfort and protection to each other; also for the conveniences offered to hapless pairs by a large matrimonial exchange. Many people come

and go, and the population of Berlin Heights, I am told, is always changing. No one likes to stay there long; the odour of the place being rather rank, even in the nostrils of an emancipated female. But the Free Lovers tell you that a great many persons sympathise with the free life on Berlin Heights, who in their social cowardice shrink from writing their names in the visitors' books.

A more important society of Free Lovers has been brought together on Long Island, near New York city, under the odd designation of Modern Times. This village was founded by a reformer named Pearl, and is considered as the headquarters of the American Comtists; a body of reformers who have taken up the work in which Owen and Fourier failed. The dwellers in Modern Times come out for every sort of new truth. They have put down the past. It is hardly a figure of speech to say, that as far as their power can back their will, they are ready to repeal all laws and to dethrone all gods. They affect the Positive Philosophy; and this affectation is the only positive thing about them. The ten commandments, the apostles' creed, the canons and decrees, the articles of faith, have all been abolished, as rags and

shreds of superstition, in Modern Times. No man has a right to intrude into his neighbour's house ; for in this home of progressive spirits, conduct is held to have the same rights as opinion. What have you to do with me and mine ? Inside my own door, I am lord and king. What if I take a dozen wives ? How these ladies choose to live, is for themselves, and not for you, to say. What business have you to take offence, because they do not live according to your law ? In Modern Times, such questions meet with a soft reply. A woman who is fair, a man who is discreet, has nothing to fear from the moral and religious passions of his fellow-settlers. 'No questions asked' is the motto of Modern Times.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GREAT HARMONIA.

AFTER these schools of scientific reform had kept the stage of public attention for many years, insisting with noise and promise on saving society whether it would or no, their claim to be the true regenerators of their kind was suddenly invaded by a new class of zealots, who announced themselves as a native school of thinkers, not the spawn of French and Scottish brains. These new-comers were the Spiritualists, who derived their gospel from a cobbler of Poughkeepsie, a seer of genuine native grit.

Andrew Jackson Davis, this Poughkeepsie craftsman, wrote a rhapsody in four stout volumes, which he called *The Great Harmonia*, and which some of his ignorant dupes appear to have thought an original work. It was a mere parody of Swedenborg's mystical dreams about the true heaven and the true earth; and though it has

taken the minds of many persons who were bent on having a native creed, it must be rejected by a critic from the list of primary and seminal books. Swedenborg's *Arcana Cœlestia*, not Davis's *Great Harmonia*, is the true source of American Spiritualism. The latter work may have had its part in nursing the fantasies of the Spirit-circles; for, while the Swedish seer must be credited with much of what is noble and poetic in those circles, the Poughkeepsie cobbler may be credited with nearly all that is most grotesque and most profane.

The young dreamers who went out from Boston to picnic on Brook Farm, hoping to catch some glimpses of the higher life, and prove that daily duty could be treated as a fine art, were the first to make known in America how many lodes of gold lay hid in the illustrious Swede's neglected works. Of course the writings of Swedenborg were already known to a few obscure zealots in Boston and New York; New Jerusalem Churches having been founded long ago in these cities, and in some other places; but the disciples who had been found by the noble Swede in the United States were few in number and poor in gifts. No man of mark had joined them. Their priests were unlettered, their chapels obscure,

their journals without talent and without sale. The name of Swedenborg was hardly so much a power in the country as that of Zinzendorf or that of Mack. But Ripley and the little band of poets and scholars who went out into the desert of Brook Farm, introduced him to the intellectual world. In truth, the Swedish seer was necessary to these idealists. Fourier, a man without love and without a future, was too hard and cold a reformer to fill their hearts. As a ruler in the kitchen and on the farm they thought him excellent; but a good kitchen and a fat farm were not to be all in all with these high poetic natures. They wanted a new social order, but they could not receive a social order absolutely divorced like that of Fourier from every connexion with a world to come.

They found in Swedenborg much that suited their frame of mind. The Swede presented many sides to a reader. To the godly, he offered himself as a teacher of religion; to the student, as a scientific thinker; to the mystic, as a visionary; to the sceptic, as a critic. Unitarians liked him because he hinted that the Father and the Son are one. Infidels praised him for rejecting nearly half the Bible, and especially the writings of

St. Paul. To the idealists of Brook Farm he appeared as a great intelligence, which could reconcile a phalanx with the higher powers. In the combination of Fourier and Swedenborg they fancied they could see the germs of a new order of things, fruitful of good, alike to the body and the soul. Hence they made much of Swedenborg in their writings. They took from him their motto; they quoted his dreams; they admired his science; they lauded his imagination; nay, some of the more eminent men among them described him as being at once a great social reformer and a great religious seer. Ripley called his visions sublime; Channing coupled him with Fourier as a teacher of unity; Dwight pronounced him the Great Poet and High Priest.

The Rev. Henry James, a Brook Farm enthusiast, who scandalised society by making a public confession of his call to the New Jerusalem, filled many pages of *The Harbinger* with proofs that there is so little difference between Fourier and Swedenborg in practice, that a convert of one reformer may admit the other reformer's claims; since Fourier's *Passional series* (a pretty French name for *Free Love*) might be readily made to run alongside of Swedenborg's toleration

of concubines. In fact, this reverend author, a man of very high gifts in scholarship and eloquence, declared himself, on spiritual grounds, in favour of a system of divorce, which is hardly to be distinguished from divorce at will.

A still more eminent convert to Swedenborg's gospel was George Bush, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature ; a man who had received his training at Dartmouth and Princeton, where he was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church. Bush's writings on the Old Testament give him a high place among Biblical scholars. When he became a convert to the Swedish gospel, the whole world of New York ran after him ; and many of the prophets of failing causes (such as the Rev. James Boyle and the Rev. Charles Weld), came about him, in the hope of catching some sparks from this new celestial torch. Ripley and his friends had given the Swedish dreamer prestige, Bush and his followers gave him popularity. Two years after the date of Bush's conversion, Swedenborg had become a name of power in the schools of Boston and New York.

It must be noted with care how little the New Jerusalem churches had to do with this starting of their prophet as a candidate for inspired honours in

the United States. Those old and humble bodies were as nothing in the cause. Bush, as a man of learning, was disliked and feared by the illiterate priests; and he repaid their hate with open scorn and eloquent contempt. When crowds of credulous and mystical disciples gathered round his pulpit, they came about him, not from those tiny chapels which the sect had built in nameless streets, not from the colleges and schools of theology, so much as from the centres of Naturalistic Socialism. Most of his converts were those followers of Owen and Fourier, who had failed in the search for a better life at New Harmony and Red Bank. The hearts of these men were ripe in superstition. Fourierites, who had refused to give the Father a place in His own world, listened with eager trouble to any poor trickster who professed to communicate with the unseen world. Owenites, who banished from their model societies the very names of angel and spirit, received into New Harmony every wandering biologist and mesmerist who could bring them signs of the existence of Satanic life. Dr. Buchanan, one of these vagrant operators, had a great success under the wing of Dale Owen, who endorsed for the American public his sleight of hand. A clairvoyant,

an animal magnetizer, an electro-biologist, had a good time, generally, at Red Bank.

Now Professor Bush caught up in his nets these restless souls, who wanted a new gospel without knowing where it could be found. Bush had such a gospel ready in his hand ; and, being a master of the two sacred languages, Hebrew and Arabic, and a critical writer on the times of Moses and Mohammed, it was not for the ignorant multitude to think that such a man could be mistaken in his text. A crowd of seekers took him at his word.

Yet, a live country like America could hardly be expected to receive, on any large scale, an old and worn philosophy from a foreign source, until it had been stamped with a new and native die. In order to gain free entry into her ports, Swedenborgianism had to put on the livery of the United States.

Unlike many perverts, Bush was no textual fanatic. If he adopted the great Swede, his adoption was that of the spirit rather than of the word. The narrow bigotries of Salem Chapel, having no place in his heart, found no echoes on his tongue. Not content, like so many smaller men, to try every truth that came in his way by one standard, he never dreamed of closing his eyes on sur-

- rounding facts, in fear lest they should grate on his sacred text. All truths, he said, would be found to go hand in hand ; therefore he kept his heart open, like a poet ; as keenly alive to the voice without as to the throb within.

A strange wonder came upon New York in the tricks of Kate and Margaret Fox, who put Buchanan and the electro-biologists to sudden shame. Mysterious raps and taps, touches and sounds, became the fashion. A country in which the oldest houses are not a century old would seem to offer a very poor field for ghosts ; but the spirits which haunt a wigwam and an Indian lodge may easily find nooks and crannies in a log house ; and therefore, when the ghostly taps and thumps which had been heard by Kate and Margaret Fox were duly noised abroad, every old mill and farm in the province found itself suddenly troubled by a ghost. Bush seized upon this new marvel, and by his skill and daring got the spirits, to which the Fox girls had given a voice, completely subject to his will.

The learned Professor, it must be noted, had been long familiar with the story of these ghostly sounds, these demon tokens, these angelic visits. Swedenborg had spent his life in company with

spirits. Most of his English pupils had been blessed by angelic friends. In fact, the whole round of experiences described by adepts in the Progressive School of New York to-day was travelled by the London disciples of the Swede from thirty to sixty years ago. These English visionaries were visited by good spirits and bad spirits; by some who chose to rap, by others who preferred to write. Samuel Noble, minister of Cross Street Chapel, describes himself as having heard raps in his room. The Rev. John Clowes professed to write his sermons as an unconscious agent of the spirits. Bush knew these things, and on the strength of this knowledge he put forth a claim upon all the ghostly tribe which had suddenly leapt into life around him.

In 1847 he had published a book, in which he placed the phenomena of Mesmer side by side with the disclosures of Swedenborg; a book which is the true source of all the spiritual circles in the United States.

"The object aimed at," he explained, "is to elevate the phenomena of mesmerism to a higher plane than that on which they had been wont to be contemplated. The fundamental ground assumed is, that the most important facts disclosed in the

mesmeric state are of a spiritual nature, and can only receive an adequate solution by being viewed in connexion with the state of disembodied spirits and the laws of their intercourse with each other."

The value of this volume lay in an appendix, in which Professor Bush introduced to the American public a new and a native seer, in Andrew Jackson Davis, then a young fellow of twenty. Bush spoke of Davis in the highest terms ; pledging his word that the young prophet was an honest man, in possession of the noblest spiritual gifts. In a short time Davis quitted his patron and set up for himself as a rival prophet, producing the *Great Harmonia* and other bulky works, the substance of which was taken from Swedenborg. When Bush saw reason to think his young friend no better than a rogue, he took up his parable against him ; but the shoemaker of Poughkeepsie beat the Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in New York ; and the high movement in favour of a more spiritual science, which began among the poets of Brook Farm, and grew among the Professors of Boston and New York, fell away into the widely popular, but in no way intellectual societies, which find their gospel in the *Great Harmonia*, their leaders in Home and Chace.

The social doctrine of the Great Harmonia is, even more than the corresponding passage in Swedenborg from which it is derived, hostile to marriage ; and nearly all the people who call themselves Harmonial Philosophers are found to be frequently changing the partners of their joys and griefs.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE CIRCLES.

DAVIS, the new Yankee Prophet, was a cross between the hard Naturalism of Owen and Fourier, and the dreamy Spirituality of Swedenborg. In what is native—the form and method, not the substance of his system—the Poughkeepsie lad was racy of the soil and consonant with his time. On all the large subjects of man's thoughts,—on love and life, on good and evil, on body and spirit, on stars and suns, on wisdom and waste, on birth and death, on earth and heaven,—he was little beyond a faint echo of his great original. What was new to him was the heat, the petulance, the ignorance, the irreverence of his books. Swedenborg was a religious being, Davis a stranger to religious life. The Swede was a reader of the Bible,—a respecter of the past. Davis threw away his Bible as a Gull's horn-book, and spurned all records of our race as so much trash and false-

hood. To the Yankee Prophet the past was nothing, the present much, and the future more. Last year being dead and gone, his hope was in the year about to come. His science was crude, but his aims were practical. Freedom of the spirit meant to him a freedom that could be used. A Yankee, he could not spend his life in dreams. If spirits came to him at will, he would make them work : if grace were given to him, he would put it out for gain. Why was he a physician if not to cure ? Why was he a prophet if not to preach ? Why was he a searcher of hearts if not to choose his own ?

Davis appears to have felt no scruple about using his supernatural gifts for his personal gain ; since he took fees for medical advice ; and helped himself, through his angels, to the very first woman whom he chanced to like.

This lady had the misfortune to be married ; but what of that poor shred of legal difficulty ? In the Spiritual circles, hearts are no more than acids and alkalis, which draw near to each other by a natural law ; on the principle which Captain Otto explains to Lotte,—that of free affinities. Davis found in this married lady his free affinity ; and, after her death, he found a second affinity

of his soul in another married lady, whom he claimed from a surprised and outraged husband as his natural mate. This second elect ran away from her husband, got off to Indiana, headquarters of the great Spiritual doctrine of Free Divorce, and in that happy land of discontented wives found a release from her hateful bonds.

One of the things which a man in the Spiritual circles thinks himself most of all free to do is to fall in love with his neighbour's wife,—if the seeking after natural mates can properly be termed falling in love.

From my bundle of cases, two brief narratives may be cited in illustration of the way in which this spiritual mating comes about:—

CARPENTER'S CONFESSION.

" March 30th, 1867.

"I was born in the State of New York, and moved to the west when I was thirteen years old. Our family settled in Wisconsin, and my folks became intimately acquainted with a revivalist preacher named Berner, whose teachings affected me some. He was connected in his labours with Charles De Groff, a Spiritualist from New York.

Afterwards I became a Swedenborgian, and continued in that belief for several years.

“In the spring of 1863, I moved with my family to Minnesota, and formed the acquaintance of Dr. Swain and his wife. She had been a Swedenborgian, and was better versed in the doctrines of that set than I. She was now a Spiritualist of the school headed by Andrew Jackson Davis. She lent me books on the Harmonial Philosophy written by Davis, and speedily indoctrinated me into the mysteries of Spiritualism. She was a medium possessed of psychometrical powers, and under her teachings I soon learnt that it is wrong for men and women who are not adapted to each other to live together. I had been married seven years, and led a life of domestic happiness, although my wife never sympathised with my religious views. Under the teachings of the Harmonial Philosophy, I was led to reflect a great deal, and visited Mrs. Swain frequently to converse on topics that interested me. My wife became suspicious, and charged me with an improper intimacy with Mrs. Swain. This was not the case; but as time wore on, I gradually experienced a diminution of affection for my wife, and became more attached towards Mrs. Swain. Mrs.

Swain said that there was no compatibility between Dr. Swain and herself, and that she had frequently thought of leaving him.

“The Harmonial Philosophy teaches in effect, that persons who are not ‘affinitized’ are committing adultery in living as man and wife. Davis, however, teaches that by proper means, in many cases an ‘affinity’ can be brought about, but the general tendency of Spiritualism is to separate those who are not congenial.

“During a year and a half I became very impressible; in fact a medium; the invisible guides impressed me with many ideas of a religious nature, some of which tended to convince me of the reality of the Spiritual world. Among other things, I became strongly impressed with the growing incompatibility between myself and my wife; and, on the other hand, with the growing affinity between Mrs. Swain and myself. These impressions I communicated from time to time to Mrs. Swain, and she in turn told me of similar impressions which she had in reference to me. . . . My wife had ceased her suspicions. . . . I learnt from Mrs. Swain that many Spiritualists of note had thus sought out their affinities, and had abandoned the connexions which were inharmo-

nious. My course in the matter was determined by what I then conceived to be religious duty. Mrs. Swain told me of the doings of John M. Spear, with whom she was acquainted. He divorced his first wife on account of incompatibility, and lived with Miss Clara Hinckley with whom he had discovered an affinity. He went to England with her.

“After I had been acquainted with Dr. Swain and his wife for two years, I was called by business connexions to St. Paul, in Minnesota, where I formed the acquaintance of several mediums; one was living with her affinity, another was mismatched and was in search of her affinity. There were but two or three families of Spiritualists in St. Paul who were not mis-mated. Nine-tenths of all the mediums I ever knew were in this unsettled state, either divorced or living with an affinity, or in search of one. The majority of Spiritualists teach Swedenborg’s doctrine of *one* affinity, appointed by Providence for all eternity, although they do not blame people for consorting when there is an attraction; else, how is the affinity to be found? Another class, of whom Warren Chace is the most noted example, travelled from place to place, finding a great many affinities everywhere.

“CHARLES C. CARPENTER.”

TOWLER'S CONFESSION.

"Cleveland, March 25th, 1867.

"Fifteen years since, while a Universalist preacher, I became a Spiritualist; and speaking of myself as an example, I here state that Spiritualism undermined and destroyed my respect for marriage. It led me to look on that institution in the light of a doctrine of affinity, and to regard it as a union or arrangement which the parties to it were at liberty to make or remake to suit their own notions of interest and convenience; in short, through Spiritualism, as presented to my mind, marriage lost entirely its institutional and authoritative character, and there was substituted for it an affinital relation, to exist or be dissolved at the pleasure of the parties. This was the theoretical view. In process of time, I became what is called a Free Lover—meaning by that simply one who holds that the individual has the right to make and remake his or her connubial relations without consulting any authority, religious or legal. This always seemed to me, and does now seem to me to be the legitimate result of the doctrine of in-

dividual sovereignty which Spiritualism unquestionably teaches.

“My acquaintance with Spiritualists was quite extensive until within five or six years past, and among those with whom I have been acquainted the tendency of thought in regard to marriage has been of the same caste. I am also acquainted with most of the Free Lovers who have at one time or another congregated at Berlin Heights in this state, and also with many others who sympathised with that movement scattered here and there throughout the West. And though it cannot be said with truth that all Spiritualists are Free Lovers, yet it may be said that all Free Lovers, with rare exceptions, are Spiritualists. There can be no doubt in the mind of any one who has been behind the scenes, that among the adherents of Spiritualism there are many Free Lovers, practically, who would not like to be known and reckoned as such. Indeed, of late years, Spiritualists have been seeking to remove from their system the stigma of teaching free love ; and yet it is notorious, at least among themselves, that some of those who are loudest in denouncing that doctrine are practising what they profess to repudiate. As I have defined free love above,

there is an abundance of Free Lovers amongst Spiritualists.

“Among the lecturers and leaders in the Spiritualistic movement with whom I have been acquainted, I think the greater number have either been divorced legally, or have found themselves unaffinitised,—in such cases seeming to feel themselves at liberty to go outside of their matrimonial relations for the love they could not find therein. I could give many names, but prefer not to do so, because the facts in my knowledge have in most instances been made to me in a confidential manner; so I content myself with speaking of the matter in this general way.

“J. W. TOWLER.”

Thus, by precept and by example, the Yankee Prophet has taught his congregation of Spiritualists and Harmonists—a congregation which Judge Edmonds puts at the figure of four millions—what he means by liberty of the spirit. The practical issue of his teaching is expressed in the coarse idiom of New York :—

“Every man has a right to do what he damned pleases !”

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOOKING BACK.

WHAT is the meaning of this singular development of religious life in Germany, in England, in the United States? is a question which will present itself to every mind. I do not presume to answer it. We are only on the threshold of a great study; and a thousand facts may need to be considered in the final verdict which are not yet within our ken. But on looking back into that fascinating branch of the history of our Christian society, which concerns itself with the inner circle of man's passions, we find some hints which may be useful when we attempt to penetrate the meaning of what appears to some a very sudden and alarming growth of noxious things.

From the Apostles' day downward, the main question in every church, so far as the church has dealt with the laws of our family and social life, has been put in this wise:—What can be done

with that always fierce and sometimes lawless yearning of the heart called love ?

Man would be an easy thing to govern, if he had no desires of the blood to disturb his pulse. Passion makes us frail, even while it makes us strong. The perfect being, conceived in the brain of Plato, had no sex.

In the East and in the West, in the first century and in the nineteenth century, at Jerusalem as at Antioch, in Rome as in Geneva, the conservative churches have found themselves in front of this disturbing force. In all ages they have been compelled to study the means of flanking an object, which they could not surmount, and which seems to have been thrown by nature into their path. Most of all, has this been the case in Western Europe, where a special reading of the sacred text has been combined with some fragments of a Pagan creed. " Ah," the priests have often cried in their dismay, " if man had not been created male and female ! "

On nearly all sides, the existence of a celestial order, under which there will be no such rite as marriage, has been assumed as one of those points about which there could be no dispute. That celestial order is said to be the highest state in

which a created being can dwell. A true church, it is supposed, must strive to reproduce that heavenly order here below. If we would draw nigh unto Him, we must do so on the lines of approach which He has laid down. Do we not daily ask, as our first boon, from the Father, that His will may be done on earth even as it is done in heaven? What is that will, and how is it done in heaven?

Here lies the germ of nearly all our trouble with the higher and nobler longings of the soul. What is it that the Father asks from His sons? Is it His will that the household passions shall be conquered, that no more young men shall be married, that no more children shall be born? Some teachers hold so; saying that the word of God is clear and strong in favour of a celibate, unproductive life. Others, again, perceive a different meaning in the sacred text. Before all, and after all, it is for us a question of what is meant—a point on which the most learned doctors differ, since nature and inspiration seem to be here at war.

All reasoners admit that the higher and the lower worlds described in the Bible, are not the same in kind; and that the beings who people

them can hardly live by a common rule. In one there is no change, in the other there is no rest. Heaven feels no waste ; her angels sing to-day as they sang in the dawn of time ; and no need exists in their blessed state for renewing a life which suffers no decline in a million years. Earth, on its side, knows no pause ; her children perish, coming and going like the flowers, so that her higher, equally with her lower forms of life, can only be preserved from failure by a delicate play of her reproducing powers. When you have waste, it would seem that you must have growth. When things grow old, they must be redeemed by things which are new. Age implies youth, and death needs birth.

Where, then, lies the analogy between that higher sphere and this nether orb ? How can the things of earth be likened to the things of heaven ? Nothing is surer than that a close imitation of what is called celestial order, would, in a hundred years, restore this globe to the dominion of savage beasts.

Is that an end to be desired by godly men in the interest of a nobler law and a better life ? Some teachers have not shrunk from saying so ; bold logicians, who would rather kill the world

than deny a text; but the masses of men who are neither saints nor critics, could never be seduced by eloquent speech into adopting that loveless and joyless theory of a perfect church. Love of woman and pride of offspring are too strongly rooted in the hearts of men for either priest or priestess to pluck them out; except in some few chosen cases, where other, and not more saintly passions have been planted in the stead of this love and pride.

The Church of Southern Europe made herself the champion of this anti-social spirit. She adopted slowly, but she held tenaciously, the dogma that a celibate life is necessary to the discharge of ministerial functions. She gradually came to look on woman as a snare, on love as a sin. She forbade her priests to enter on the duties of husbands and fathers. She divided the world into two great orders—the sacerdotal and the secular; and she made a rule that no member of the sacred class should have anything to do with woman in the way of love. Believing in a heaven of monks and nuns, she strove to introduce on earth a kingdom of monks and nuns. But in striving after this image of celestial order she ran herself upon a thousand rocks. Even in days when

she seemed to be working her will on earth, she found the trials to which she exposed herself from the revolt of human passion fatal to her peace and all but fatal to her power; for a Church depending on logic and authority for its very existence had to patronise a dogma which she could not wholly defend, a practice which she could not always enforce.

The first stage of Essenic Christianity, with its love-feasts and its common stores, had hardly yet passed into oblivion, before the Western Church began to trifle with the first principles of domestic order, by exalting the ascetic habits of a monk into proofs of a higher calling and a nobler virtue than belonged to the very best of married men. Whence came this anti-social spirit, this war against woman and against love? Not from the Teacher of Galilee. Not from His disciples. Not from the earliest Fathers. One text, and only one, is drawn from the New Testament in favour of separating the clergy from the laity—saints by office from sinners by choice; and that one text, some folk assert, is one that tells for the opposite side. St. Paul declared that a bishop should be the husband of *one wife*. What Paul meant by these words has been much disputed; one obvious ren-

dering is, that Paul addressed his caution to the church, not against the right of marriage, but against the wrong of polygamy ; which was then, as it had been in olden time, a habit with his countrymen, the Jews. It is certain that St. Paul desired to have in his model bishop a man who was a householder, a husband, and a father. " A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God ? " Such a text lends no support to the Western theory of a celibate and separate priesthood ; since it is clearly stated that the bishop must be a householder, like other men ; a husband, like other men ; a father, like other men. His care in governing his house is made the measure of his right to govern in the church. Household virtues and clerical virtues are recognised as the same in kind. The Apostolic Constitutions cite these words of Paul in such a way as to imply that, in the third century, a single man could not be raised to the sacred office. Paul's rule appears to be, that a bishop *must* be the husband of one wife.

Whence, then, did the notion of a world with-

out woman and without love descend into the Church?

In nearly all those Eastern creeds again which the new dispensation of our Lord made was there had been more or less of the spirit of renunciation and asceticism. The Chaldean priests forbade their pupils to eat flesh, to drink wine, and to marry wives. The Indian Brahman, after seeing his grandson born, was bound to observe the strictest rule: to fast much, to pray often; to put away his spouse; to relinquish all the pleasures of sense. An Essenic Jew considered passion as a snare, and in the higher grades of his sect he absolutely forbade his scholar to indulge in the weakness of wedded love. The priests of Isis were condemned to a single wife, though the Egyptian custom, like the Hebrew custom, allowed laymen to take as many partners as they could get. Among the followers of Gotama Buddha, the priests were bound to vows of chastity, the breach of which vows was punished by degradation from the sacred office. The Greeks and Romans had their vestals, and the priests of Rhea had to offer a peculiar sacrifice before her fane.

All such Pagan rites and rules would seem to have been foreign, if not hostile, to the new dispensation.

sation ; for the earlier records of the Church contain ample proofs that for many generations, the clergy of all ranks were free to marry, just as their secular brethren were free. That proof is sown upon the record ; not in one place only ; but here and there, by chance and by the way ; not as evidence of a fact, which it had not entered into any one's heart to deny ; but for some secondary purpose which the writer had in view. This kind of evidence, as every lawyer knows, is of the very best. Polycarp tells a story of Valens, a priest who got into trouble on account of his wife. Irenæus mentions a deacon who received Marcus the magician into his house, and was punished for his disobedience to orders by the seduction of his beautiful wife. Tertullian's letter to his wife on the duty of living in a holy state is well known, and no one doubts that when that letter was indited Tertullian was a priest. Ignatius speaks of the many blessed saints who had entered into marriage bonds ; never doubting that a saint was equally a saint whether he led a married or a single life. Cyprian gives an account of Novatus, a priest who kicked his wife in a fit of passion, and was tried for the murder of his unborn child.

To pass from examples to the rules which

govern them, we may glance at the Apostolic Constitutions ; records of the third century, which contain full particulars as to the way in which the clergy lived. Not one word is said in the primitive articles of the Church as to the priest being a celibate man. A bishop was to be the husband of one wife ; if that wife died he was not to marry again ; and this rule applied, not only to a bishop, but to a deacon and a priest. The article seems to have been directed against that vice of all Jewish societies, polygamy ; a vice prevailing in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria the three chief centres of Jewish and Christian life. For, it is expressly stated in these early Constitutions, that a bishop, priest, or deacon, being a married man at the time of his ordination, is to be content with his partner, and not to seek or for himself any other wives. If he be single, he is to remain so. Men who filled the lower grades of the clerical office,—the sub-deacon, the reader, the singer, and the door-keeper—were commanded to marry no more than one woman ; proof that the prohibitions were directed against the prevailing Jewish error of polygamy, not against the primary law of family life.

In the Apostolic Canons, which present the

Church rules of a later age, perhaps of the fifth century after Christ, we find that some changes have crept in, though the spirit of the church is still the same. All classes of priests may be married men, with homes, but not harems, like those unconverted Jews who scandalized even the Pagan citizens of Rome. Some signs of a coming change are found. It is no longer needful to become a husband and father before trying to become a bishop. A single man may aspire to the highest offices in the church, and the fact of his being alone in the world is a point, perhaps, in his favour. Singers, readers, door-keepers, and the like, are still most freely chosen from among fathers of families ; and if such officers chance to be single at the time of their election, they receive hints to comply with the social rule. Not so, the higher ranks. A man who is single when ordained, is to remain so ; if married, he is to retain his wife. The Church has come to resist all change of condition as a mere excitement of the spirits unfavourable to the chances of a godly life. A wedded priest is expressly forbidden to put away his spouse. "A bishop or a priest," says the Sixth Canon, "may in no wise separate from his wife under the pretext of religion ; if he puts her

away, he shall be excommunicated ; and if he persists, he shall be deprived."

The social principle and household practice taught in these Apostolic Canons have always been upheld by the primitive Oriental Church

CHAPTER XXX.

WAR OF CREEDS.

FROM whatever source it may have been derived, the anti-social principle, which regards woman as a snare, and repels love as a sin, was adopted in Rome. It was not a growth of the soil ; not a choice of her own ; since it would seem to have been against her genius, as it certainly was against her laws. It came upon her from without ; from the country which has supplied her in every age with spiritual weapons and spiritual ideas ; from Spain.

Spain is a bastard daughter of the East. The blood of Tyre and of Jerusalem, no less than that of Rome and Syracuse, is in her veins ; the Phœnician and the Egyptian, like the Roman and the Greek, having left their arts, their inspirations, and their vices in her soil. Isis, Diana, and Ashtaroth, have each a home in that sunny clime ; not only in the streets of Cadiz, where the names

are still Phœnician ; not only in the convents of Saguntum, where the men still drone a song once chanted by the Vestals ; not only in the alleys of Granada, where the gipsy dancers imitate, and perhaps excel, the lascivious grace of Tintah ; but in every city of the south and east ; under every vine, and palm, and pomegranate ; in the hearts of women, in the fancies of artists, in the reveries of monks and priests. Allied in blood and genius to the mystic East, Spain has in every age been the seed-place of religious passions and religious creeds. To her, the Latin Church owes nearly all that marks her faith and discipline as things distinct from those of the Apostolic age. From her fertile soil, came the rule of Celibacy, the practice of Auricular Confession, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception ; as well as the Mendicant Orders, the Inquisition, and the Order of Jesus. Splendid as her services have often been to the Church, it is doubtful whether Rome has not suffered more from the friendship of Spain than from the enmity of all her Teutonic foes. Always feared, and sometime baffled, by the Holy Chair, Spain has known how to bide her time, to wear out her adversaries, to seize her occasions, and at length to win her point. Her last, but not her greatest stroke, has been to

force on the reluctant church, after a fight extending over many centuries, some part of her old worship of Ashtaroth ; the peculiarities of which she has hardly veiled under a younger and softer Syrian name.

Spain drew the first black line through the Christian household ; putting the clerk on one side, the laic on another side ; dividing men who had heretofore been brothers ; and raising that which had been a simple calling to the level of a caste. She began this work of isolation at Elvira, in the year 305, by declaring that no priest should be allowed to serve the altar until he had put away his wife !

These words fell on the Church like flashes from the sky. Most of the clergy were at that time married men. The love of husband and wife was held to be a good and holy thing ; and more than half the bishops had entered into the matrimonial state. By the canons which then ruled the Church universal, a priest was sternly forbidden to put away his spouse under any pretext of religious scruple ; and one who persisted in his unsocial act was to be suspended and deprived. Of course, in so large a body as the Christian church, some difference of opinion might be found. Here a teacher

exalted matrimony at the cost of celibacy; the second teacher exalted celibacy at the expense of matrimony; but no national Church had yet claimed that the condition of a husband was necessary to the exercise of sacred functions. The principle of family life was thought to be divine. To deny the sanctity of honest love, as it exists between man and woman, was in some sort to slander the goodness of Heaven and the perfection of its work. No paltering with this sacred element was sufficient. A priest who made a pretence of abstaining from meat, from wine, and from love, as from things unlawful and unclean, was to be promptly denounced and excommunicated by his church. Thus Spanish rule, proposed at Elvira, was, in form and spirit, a declaration of war against the whole concupiscent and priesthood.

Nor was this rule the whole. Ostius, of Ostia, procured a decree from the Council, to the effect that no clerk should have a woman residing beneath his roof, unless she were either his sister or his daughter, and not even then until the woman had taken upon herself a vow of virginity for life. This clause appeared to be derived from the religion of Diana rather than from that of Christ. In the great temple of Saguntum,

priests of Diana were bound to take the oaths of chastity; but among the followers of St. Peter, a married saint, such vows as had been sworn by these Pagan priests appeared to be anything but of God.

So far as they came into force, these articles of Elvira put an end to the old love-feasts, in which the sexes had always joined, and brought into disrepute the whole order of ministerial women. Up to that day, the preacher had been aided in his work and comforted in his home, not only by his wife, the mother of his children, but by many Marthas and Marys whom he found living in the Bethanys to which he carried the torch of gospel truth. Now, he was to have his life apart. A wall of separation was to divide the layman from the clerk. A priest was to have his compensation, even as the vestal of a pagan city had her compensation, in pomp, in dignity, in power; but, like that vestal, he was to flee from love as birds from a fowler's snare. The Christian family was to be divided, like the worshippers of Vesta and Diana, into a sacred caste and a profane caste, the celibate priests constituting an upper order, the married laity a lower order; the servants of God being protected from the thrall of women as from a trial and temptation beyond the strength of ordinary

men to resist. In fact, an absolute separation from the companionship of women, was to be taken for the future as the sign of a holy life.

Simple priests in Gaul and Italy heard with wonder and laughter of such decrees being passed. At Elvira was a local council, the articles of which had no authority out of Spain; yet men of serious minds, who prayed to have peace and unity in the church, would see dark cause for apprehension in the rise of such a spirit. Ashtaroth was the ruling goddess of the south of Spain; not many years had passed since Santa Rufina and Justina, saints so gloriously pictured by Murillo, had been torn into shreds by a Seville mob daring to insult their idol in the street. What could say what was to come? In her Canaanite form of Salambo, this popular goddess, queen of heaven, the lady of the crescent and though called the patroness of chastity, was worshipped with licentious rites, not in Seville or Cadiz only, but in every province of southern Spain. Her priests were eunuchs, yet they were not chaste. Augustine, who saw these priests at Carthage, told the Church that though they were celibate men, they passed their lives in practising the grossest forms of vice.

From Elvira, this Phœnician dogma of a celibate priesthood passed into Gaul, from Gaul into Italy, from Italy into Helvetia; meeting in every place with the same resistance; sanctioned by one bishop, condemned by another; here gaining ground, there losing it; in one reign denounced from the Papal chair, in the next reign supported by the same; gradually rooting itself in the soil; until the conversion of the Gothic races brought a nobler genius and a new vitality into the Church of Europe.

From the date of the Gothic conversion to that of the Gothic reformation—a period, speaking roughly, of a thousand years—the warfare against a celibate clergy was conducted mainly by the North against the South—mainly, not wholly. Thousands of priests in the North adopted the Spanish theory; thousands of priests in the South resisted it. Still the battle was mainly fought between the northern and the southern branches of the great Christian flock. Gaul and Italy, though they were made the battle-fields of contending cohorts, counted for little in the fray.

This fight between the Phœnician spirit and the Gothic spirit was long and fierce; lasting for a thousand years, and only ending when the Church

was rent in twain. It was a fight in which woman—her character, her purity, her equality was the prize.

Is the feminine part of human nature so degraded and degrading that a man who loves society of a wife is thereby unfit to approach altar of God? That, under all disguises, was the actual issue of the fray.

It is a pastime for philosophical observers to note the shifts into which the adversaries in this cause are often driven. Spain had to say the worst of woman, and she said it with her best malice, so that haters of the sex will find in her books of her old divines a perfect armoury of slander. In their pages a girl was represented as a serpent, in which there was a lurking demon. At her best she was only a fury and a cheat. All the worst things in earth and heaven were feminine; all that were cruel, all that were false, all that were heartless; thus, the Harpies were feminine, the Vices were feminine, the Fates were feminine. Eve ate the apple, the daughters of Israel debauched their sire, Asenath tempted Joseph, Bathsheba led David into sin. Concubines were the curse of Solomon. From first to last woman had been a danger and delusion to the uns

pecting eye. Her heart was vain, her head was light; she was a thing of paint and patches, of bangles and braids. Her eyes were bent to entice, her feet were swift to go wrong, her words were softened to deceive. Her veins were full of fire, and those who came near her were always scorched. Her thoughts were unchaste; her mouth was greedy for wine; she threw out her lures to entice men's souls. Painted and perfumed like a harlot, she sat in the porches and the gateways ready to make barter of her charms. All her passions were seductive, all her inclinations for evil. Her touch was a taint, her very breath was unclean. Nay, the desires of her heart were unnatural and demoniac; since she preferred a demon lover to a handsome youth of mortal parentage, and would yield her beauty to an imp of darkness rather than to a holy saint.

Men of Gothic race, on the other side, held woman in the highest reverence. Taken as either a mother or a wife, they looked on her, habitually, as something finer and more precious than themselves. In their simple souls, they imagined that the best of men must be all the better for having won a good woman's love; nay, that a wise husband and father would be more likely to make a

good pastor, than a recluse who had neither wife to soften, nor child to instruct his heart. An old and mystic sentiment of their race inclined them to believe that women have a quicker sense and keener enjoyment of spiritual things than men; hence they never could be made to see how the separation of priests from the daily and domestic company of women, should work for good. In their old mythologies, woman held a high and almost a sacred place. She was oracle and seer. She stood between men and God; interpreter, mediatrix; a visible link, connecting the seen with the unseen world. Woman was the subtler, rarer spirit; a charmer, a comforter; while man, at best, was but a warrior and a scald. This lofty view of woman's place in nature, had been brought by our Gothic fathers from the old religion into the new; and none of these men of northern genius could let it go. For a thousand years they fought for the right of woman to stand in honour, as equal and as wife, by the side of priest and bishop, just as she stood beside king and poet; urging that in a true Christian society, the clerk and laic should be considered as men of one household, and that St. Peter's followers should be left free to do as St. Peter himself had done.

Rome, taking part with the nearer race and more exacting Church, condemned and swept away these protests of the Northern men. Her power to censure and coerce was great, because her service to mankind had been so incessant and so brilliant, that with very little strain of words, the world might be said to have come to live in her alone; yet in her struggle to sustain this joyless Spanish dogma she fought, at least with her Gothic converts, a losing battle; since she had to meet and beat a force renewed by nature from generation to generation. In the end, all the great churches of Gothic origin cast that canon from their door; but not until they were obliged to fling away with it the habits which connected them with Rome.

Ages before Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and their comrades, found themselves compelled by the public conscience, in their several countries, to accept the pledge of marriage, a movement had arisen in the North, which extended itself into every country then peopled, even though it were only slightly, by men of the Gothic race.

The men and women who made this stir in the Church were known by different names; in Germany they were called the Sisterers, in

Flanders the Beguins, in Italy the Beghardi, in England the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and in Spain, at a later day, the Spirituistas. Not much difference can be traced in their views and practices. They agreed in rejecting the idea that woman is a snare. They agreed in rejecting the idea that love is a sin, and family life unfit for a minister of grace. They taught that the male and female were created one flesh in the Lord, and that in the Lord the woman should not be separated from the man. They said, in word and in deed, that true affection is not carnal, and that brethren and sisters may dwell together, not simply without offence, but with actual increase of their spiritual zeal.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.


IN our own day, all the high-church movements run into some form of spiritual mysticism and social innovation. When a revival breaks out, the converted man finds himself in a new relation to God and to his wife.

The sentiment which underlies this state of mind, long ago heard in the sermons of Ann Lee, in the revelations of Swedenborg, in the stories of Göthe, has sometimes found a voice in our private life,—in the heart of our saddest and straitest sects. Who will ever forget the passionate words in which Mary Gurney, pleading for her name and fame against the loud and general condemnation of her guilty flight from her husband's house, avowed that she was led into what the world condemned as her fatal sin by genuine yearning for a truer spiritual life than she could find in the staid and tran-

quill decorum of that husband's home? All the Teutonic seers and scribes have had more or less of this mystic sense of a higher sexual affinity than that of ordinary wedlock. Swedenborg reports it as the law of his upper spheres. Göthe gives the yearning after such a bliss to Werter, and touches with the same delicious tenderness the heart of his heroine Ottilie. In all our Gothic capitals from Stockholm to London, from Berlin to New York—we see a rapid slackening and unwinding of the old-fashioned nuptial ties; to the great relief and delight of pupils in the schools of Milton and Göthe,—to the very great scandal and amazement of men who look on marriage and divorce from the point of view held by men of the Latin race.

A man in the south of Europe—a Sicilian, an Andalucian, a Tuscan—can hardly ever be brought to comprehend, much less to approve, the fuss we northern people make about liberty of divorce. What, he asks, can it matter to a man of sense whether he can divorce his wife or not? Thinking but little of his marriage vows on earth, a man in the south of Europe has no desire to saddle himself with the weight of a partner beyond the grave. In his idiom, and in


his belief, a wife is an impediment. In his eyes, women are much the same; one female being exactly like another,—with a difference only in the height, the shape, the colour, and the hair. He looks on many of them as charming, on most of them as false, and on all of them as frail. His poets and story-tellers inform him that the man who trusts a woman is a fool. If he chances to have a wife, it is rare indeed that he chooses her for himself. His union is arranged for him by his mother,—perhaps by his mother's priest. Love has no concern in his choice, and from the habits of his country he has no belief that the girl whom he makes his wife will regard him in any other light than her partner in a family and friendly game of chance. He does not mean to be true to her, and he hardly expects that she will be true to him. He assumes that, in a year or so, she will accept the services of a friend—a cavalier—who will carry her shawl, escort her to the play, amuse her with gossip and scandal, wait on her at mass; and, as he himself aspires to gain some soft reward for services of a similar kind in other quarters, he can never feel sure, act as he may, that Iago's fate will not be his own. What then? Is it not better to shut his eyes? Some years ago, in



glancing through a number of marriage contracts in Florence, I was struck with what then appeared to me a singular fact. Many of these papers contained a clause in reference to that probable *cavaliere servente*, which Byron long ago told his countrymen they would never be able to understand, because it is a thing of the Italian race. In many of these contracts, a clause was introduced defining the way in which the young bride, still a girl in the cloister, should select her cavalier, when the time arrived for her to act after the manner of her kind, so as to make the new arrangement for her infidelity pleasant to her lord. In brief, the husband was to have a veto on the choice of his wife's lover. Was Byron wrong in saying that Englishmen would never learn to understand Italian life?

A man of the Latin race believes it the height of wisdom to be patient with a woman's faults. Now and then he may flash into jealous rage, and when he does so, his ire may be swift and fatal. But the husband who draws a knife against his rival is regarded, at least in the politer cities, as a savage. In one of the finest houses in Florence, a pious and gentle woman once told me that no Tuscan ever drew his poniard in the cause of love,

since jealousy was out of fashion, and the man who troubled himself about other people's amusements, would be thought a fool. Even when the knife is drawn against a rival, it is in the name of some personal pique, not in revenge for an injury felt in the soul. Commonly the injured man is willing to dawdle on; amusing himself in his neighbour's house, and allowing his wife a liberty like his own. How can such a fellow be made to understand Göthe and Milton; to enter into the spiritual yearnings of Werther for his mistress, or to seize the English poet's passionate plea in favour of divorce? What would he gain by any freer rule? Suppose he could put away one pretty sinner and take a second in her stead. Would his estate be better? Not a whit. The new bride would behave exactly like the first. Found for him by his mother, by his lawyer, by his confessor, she would probably be an equal stranger to his heart. She might love him for a time, with the passionate animal fervour of the South. When he fell away in his attentions, she would cool; when she found herself deserted, she would accept the consolations freely offered to her hand. Why should such a prospect tempt him? Not feeling, like a northern man, the want of a true marriage,



he has little or no impatience with the false. All marriages appear to him the same in kind,—the work of kinsmen, priests, and lawyers, not a contract of the heart. Who ever heard one word of the affections spoken by an Italian on the eve of wedlock? Often, he has hardly seen the girl whom he is shortly to make his wife. From some male or female agent he hears that she is young, accomplished, rich. What more can he want? A nature fitted to his own? Tush! What he asks in a wife is not a counterpart to himself, a soul in harmony with his own, but a nice girl, with a good name, a fine estate, and a complaisant priest. What cares he for her affinities and genialities? These things will arrange themselves in time. Enough for him if the young lady is likely to give him a son, to be discreet in her amours, and not to worry him about going with her to mass.

What is true of this Italian in his private life is true, in a degree, of all his brethren in the south of Europe. Members of a Christian society which makes wedlock a bargain for life, and which denies the possibility of divorce, they are only too prone to take marriage as they find it,—as they would accept either a blank or a prize from the

wheel of fortune. It is an affair of so much money and so much time. It begins to-day ; some future day it will end. Meantime there are consolations for the weary,—since, when the bond is kept to the letter, no one objects to its being daily broken to the spirit. Why, then, make ado ?

A man of Gothic blood cannot rest in this lax philosophy. Full of subtle sympathies and mystic yearnings towards the partner of his soul, he throws himself into that future, in which he cannot divorce himself, even by the power of death, from the object of his present love. The family life appears to him sacred, and he can hardly think of heaven without having his wife by his side to share it.

But while he sees in this true marriage of souls a man's crown of glory, he also sees in the false marriage of wives and husbands a man's crown of thorns, from which the compassionate hand of law should offer him release. Thus he passes round to the conclusions of which we read. The idea of nuptials for eternity implies the possibility of a true and a false marriage ; true marriage implies the right to seek for the natural mate ; and false marriage implies the liberty of divorce.

This is the circle in which he moves ; and hence he may find a certain legitimacy in those excesses and aberrations of spiritual love which would strike a Gaul as signs of nothing but disease.

In free countries like Prussia, England, and the United States, changes of law must follow the actual progress of public thought. Hence, all through the north of Europe and America, we see that the old laws of man and wife are being modified ; the modifications having the common purpose of helping to free unhappy couples, paired by mistake, from vows which they cannot keep. In England, as becomes the most conservative branch of the Gothic race, we are moving slowly along this path of change ; we are not yet clear about that union of husband and wife beyond the grave ; but we are quickened by what we see is being done in Germany and America, and we shall probably keep in some sort of line with these advancing wings of the Teutonic power.

Perhaps we have hardly come as yet, to see how much these strange beginnings of a new life are due to a sudden quickening of the Gothic blood. Even in things which do not concern the family life, we see how this Gothic race in Europe, in America, and elsewhere, is stirred to its highest

reach, and to its lowest depths. Never, perhaps, since our fathers came out of their pine-forests, and threw themselves into the front of history, has the Gothic family shown more stress and storm of noble passion than in this present day.

It doubts, it fights, it pulls down, it builds up, it emigrates, it criticises, it invents with a power and thoroughness of heart unequalled in the past. Everywhere it is gaining ground. Here it founds an empire, there it invades the celestial spheres. Nothing daunts it—nothing stops it. One day it changes Central Europe by a battle; another day it wins America from the Latins by a threat. In the social field it is no less active than it is in the political field. All the strange social trials which in our day excite the brain and scare the imagination of timid people are its work.

Other breeds of men may have very high qualities and very noble virtues. No one will deny that the Celt has a fire, the Frank a skill, the Tuscan a taste, to which their fair-haired rivals in Berlin, London, and New York, have scarcely any claim. They make splendid orators and soldiers; their wit being only brighter than their swords. In every form of art they hold their own; and in some of the loftiest flights of intellect they

bear away the palm. But in some things they can only pretend to a lower rank. They are less susceptible and have fewer relations with the world of spirits. It is in these things that the Gothic races are rich beyond compare; in openness of mind towards all the ghostly messengers of fate—the voice that shrieks, the touch that burns, the form that haunts. Poorer in art, but richer in spiritual gifts, than many of their fellows, the men of this Gothic race would seem to have been armed by nature with the means for proving all these theories which concern the highest interests of our spiritual and social life.

APPENDIX.

PROFESSOR SACHS' EVIDENCE.

I HAVE been led to print Professor Sachs' Evidence in full, and in the original, for three reasons.

In the first place, because this document is full of curious and important details, of the highest interest for contemporary history, which personal and political considerations have hitherto kept from the public eye. In the second place, because it has been made the subject of many comments on the part of Ebelian writers, particularly on the part of Kanitz and Diestel, whose controversial writings are absolutely unintelligible to strangers without it. In the third place, because, though I have rejected some of the facts, and many of the opinions here stated, it is the foundation of much of my own narrative.

In availing myself of the permission to use, including permission to print, this paper, and in putting it before the reader, I believe that I am serving the interests of truth.

Darstellung
DER
PIETISTISCHEN UMTRIEBE IN KÖNIGSBERG,
VON
PROFESSOR SACHS.

IN der gegen den Herrn Archidiakonus Dr. Ebel schwebenden Untersuchungssache bin ich sowohl von dem hiesigen Königl. Consistorio, als auch später von dem Königl. Inquisitoriate als Zeuge vernommen worden, und von der letztern Behörde vielfach. Eine grosse Reihe von Fragen ist mir vorgelegt, und von mir mit Gewissenhaftigkeit, ohne die mindeste persönliche Erregtheit beantwortet und die Aussage selbst durch einen Eid bekräftigt worden.

Hiermit könnte ich denn auch die Aufgabe, die mir in dieser Sache gestellt war, für gelöst halten; denn ich selber habe nicht die Aufforderung in mir gefühlt, als Kläger gegen Ebel und seinen Anhang aufzutreten, wie ich denn auch seit den 10 Jahren, die ich aus jener Verbindung herausgelöst, still und ruhig verlebt, weder durch That noch Wort etwas Feindsaliges gegen ihn und die Seinigen unternommen habe; ja, von ihnen ausgehendem Unglimpf gegen mich habe ich nichts Anderes als Gleichmuth entgegen gesetzt, den zu erringen mir nicht einmal schwer geworden ist. Nur mit vertrauteren Freunden habe ich in dieser ganzen Zeit zuweilen über jene Verbindungen und ihre grossen, beklagenswerthen Verirrungen gesprochen. Nehme ich nun gleichwohl

und freiwillig das Wort, und zwar um Einiges mitzutheilen, das dem Richter in psychologischer Beziehung vielleicht dienen könnte, so könnte mir dies den doppelten Vorwurf der innern Anmassung und der äusseren Unberufenheit zuziehen. Theils aber ist die zu machende Mittheilung der Form nach der Art, dass es dem Richter ganz anheingestellt bleibt, ob er davon einen Gebrauch machen will und welchen, theils aber—und dies ist für mich der Bewegungsgrund—scheint mir die ganze Sache, von der die Rede ist, eine innerlich zu verwickelte, ungewöhnliche, mit psychologischen Räthseln so sehr verhüllte, dass jedem, der nicht eigne und theuer erkaufte Erfahrungen darüber besitzt, grosse Schwierigkeiten in der Auffassung und Beurtheilung begegnen mussten. Der Ausweg aber, in verwickelten moralischen Verhältnissen sich des Urtheils über Andre zu entschlagen, ist dem Richter nicht gestattet. Je wohlwollender, geistreicher, in vielfachen Verhältnissen erfahrener ich mir den Richter dieses Falles vorstelle, je mehr mit all den vorzüglichen Eigenschaften ausgerüstet, die ihn zur Lösung dieser schwierigen Aufgabe eignen, desto mehr muss ich ihn mir auch als einen solchen denken, dem jeder Beitrag zum Orientiren willkommen, wenigstens nicht gleichgültig sein werde. Ich habe weder die Absicht, anzuklagen, noch die, mich zu vertheidigen; aber ich werde von Anderen und von mir sprechen müssen, denn es handelt sich von einer Sache, die von den Personen nicht abzulösen ist, ja die Sache selbst ist Nichts als eben Verirrung der Personen: sieht man von dieser ab, so hat jene gar keine Existenz, keinen Inhalt. Was ich mitzutheilen habe, ist psychologischer Art; es bezieht sich also auf Seelenverhältnisse und Seelenzustände; auch von dieser Seite her ist von den Personen nicht zu abstrahiren; denn nur was jene bedingen, sind diese.—Ein Geistlicher wird angeklagt, ein Irrlehrer zu sein, diese Irrlehre aber als Geheimlehre zu behandeln. In dieser Geheimlehre soll nicht blos Vieles enthalten sein, das der evangelischen Kirchenlehre widerspricht, die Sittlichkeit verletzt, der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft verderblich, die Familien zerrüttend ist, sondern, er soll sich zur Verbreitung seiner Irr- und Geheimlehre sehr bedenklicher, ja verführerischer Mittel bedienen. Wer sollte die Schwere einer solchen Anklage nicht empfinden, und in wem sich nicht unmittelbar die Vermuthung des natürlichen Wohlwollens regen, es würde hierbei wohl wenigstens viel Uebertriebenes, Missdeutendes sein, vielleicht sogar auch Verfolgung aus bösem Willen gegen wahre Frömmigkeit! Haben die

Weisen und Frommen nicht von jeher Verfolgung und harte Verläumdung erfahren? Sind sie nicht immer angeklagt worden, Verführer zu sein? Und wenn etwa die Erinnerung an ähnliche Verirrungen in früheren Zeiten die Möglichkeit solcher Ereignisse ausser Zweifel setzen einen Schritt näher zur Sache thun lässt, so muss sich doch bald und zunächst die Frage erheben: wer ist die Person, die in unserer Zeit solche Lehre hat aussinnen, lehren und verbreiten können? Und wer sind diejenigen Personen, die in unserer Zeit einen solchen Einfluss auf sich haben ausüben lassen können? Denn allerdings hat es viel Auffallendes, dass das in Rede stehende Ereigniss eines unserer Zeit ist; nicht, als wenn ihr namentlich in religiöser Beziehung die Neigung zum Falschen der mannichfachsten Art abginge; von dieser vielmehr ist sie nur zu sehr behaftet, und sie geräth in der That eben so leicht in den falschen Pietismus, in die falsche Mystik, als in falschen Rationalismus, während doch wahre Religiosität Pietät ein (geoffenbartes) Mysterium und lautere Rationalität in vollkommener Verträglichkeit in sich enthält. Auffallend also und unserer Zeit fremd scheint an jenem Ereignisse nur die Physikotheologie, die Abenteuerlichkeit des rohen Anthropomorphismus von Seiten der Lehre und die Verstecktheit, die jesuitische Methode der Praxis. Ueber dieses Problem, das ungelöst keinen Zugang zum Verstehen der Sache lässt, kann, glaube ich, genügender Aufschluss gegeben werden.

Ebel—denn dieser ist der Träger der ganzen Sache, jetzt ein Mann von etwa 52 Jahren,—ist eine ursprünglich vielfach begabte, aber in keiner Weise zu einer reinen Entwicklung gelangte Natur. Sein Vater, ein schlichter Landgeistlicher, hat, wie es scheint, einen schwachen Einfluss auf seine Erziehung ausgeübt; dagegen ist sein Grossvater schon ein Schwärmer gewesen, und, wie ich von dessen Sohn selbst, dem Vater des in Rede stehenden Ebel, gehört, Irrlehren halber vom geistlichen Amte entfernt worden. Wenig vorbereitet, ist Ebel auf eine der hiesigen Schulen, die damals alle in kläglichem Zustande waren, gekommen, und mit sehr geringen Kenntnissen von ihr, wie später von der Universität entlassen worden. Es ist dies einer der wichtigsten Umstände zu seiner Erklärung nicht nur, sondern auch zu seiner Entschuldigung. Er ist niemals aus dem Zustande der tiefsten Unwissenheit herausgekommen; er hat keine Erfahrung von der geistigen Arbeit, aber auch nicht von dem geistigen Segen einer wahren Forschung; er

weiss es nicht, was es heisse, und wie es thue, mit Problemen, mit Zweifeln ringen; er kennt nicht die innere Stellung und Haltung des Geistes geistigen Aufgaben gegenüber; er ist innerlich ohne allen Schutz gegen Einfälle, gegen Halbheiten; ein tausendmal dagewesener und widerlegter Irrthum, taucht er ihm auf, wird als Inspiration, als unzweifelhafte Wahrheit ergriffen, denn — er ignorirt sie nicht etwa absichtlich, sondern thatsächlich: er kannte die Geschichte in ihrem Inhalte nicht, und so ist eigentlich für ihn noch Nichts geschehen. Es muss demnach zunächst festgehalten werden, dass er — was sich aus allen den von ihm gehaltenen grösseren Vorträgen, wie sie sich abschriftlich wenigstens bei den Acten finden werden, ergeben muss — in einer seltenen realen Unwissenheit zu bleiben das Unglück gehabt hat.

Dieses wurde für ihn ein um so grösseres, als er der Anlage nach von grosser Beweglichkeit und Reizbarkeit des Geistes sowohl als des Gemüthes ist. Unter der Menge sich zu verlieren, war weder seine Bestimmung noch seine Neigung. Bei grosser Gewandtheit und Nettigkeit der äusseren Erscheinung verfehlte er nicht, einen günstigen Eindruck zu machen; und, lebhaft wünschend, sich Raum zu machen, ohne im Besitz würdiger Mittel dazu zu sein, unaufgelegt, auch das früher Versäumte durch nachholenden Fleiss und intensivere Anstrengung zu ersetzen, bildete er an sich dasjenige zu einer grossen Fertigkeit aus, was in der Gesellschaft ein insinuantes Wesen genannt wird. Dies half ihm durch alle Examina durch, erwarb ihm einzelne Gönner und brachte ihn frühe in's Amt als Landgeistlichen. Bevor aber in der Entwicklung fortgeschritten werden kann, muss nur ein Moment angeführt werden, das vom bestimmtesten Einflusse gewesen ist.

Frühe nämlich, schon während seines Aufenthaltes auf der Universität, machte Ebel die Bekanntschaft mit einem Manne, der sich im Besitze einer Kenntniss glaubte, die vollkommen, durch den Verstand zur Einsicht bringenden Aufschluss über alle Mysterien der Religion, der Natur und der Vernunft zu geben vermochte, die er deshalb auch schlechthin Erkenntniss der Wahrheit nannte: eine Erkenntniss, nach der sich die Weisesten und Erleuchteten aller Zeiten gesehnt, von der auch einige Strahlen auf die Auserwählten gefallen waren, die aber von Niemandem, selbst von den Aposteln nicht in ihrer Vollständigkeit erlangt werden konnte; denn dies war nur dem Fleisch gewordenen Paraklet aufbehalten, und dieser sei eben er — Schönherr; denn von

diesem ist nun die Rede ; dass er der Mensch gewordene Paraklet sei, wurde aus dem Systeme bewiesen, und wiederum die Möglichkeit dieses Systems sowie seine unumstössliche Wahrheit dadurch, dass es ja nicht menschliche Weisheit, sondern göttliche Verkündigung durch den vollendeten, Mensch gewordenen Paraklet sei ; aus beiden aber, dem Dasein des Systems und des Paraklets folgte, dass nun die vollkommene Wahrheit über Alle, die ihrer theilhaftig werden wollen, d. h. die zur gläubigen Annahme des Systems sich bereit finden wollen, ausgegossen werden könne, und dass, sobald dies in einigem Umfange zu Stande gekommen sein werde, das tausendjährige Reich auf der Erde beginnen werde. Alle Personen nun, die sich dem Schönherr näherten, oder wohl gar anschlossen, mussten natürlich sehr bedeutende Persönlichkeiten im Geisterreiche sein, Vorherbestimmte, Auserwählte, auf die schon in den Büchern der Weissagung hingedeutet war.

So z. B. zweifelte Schönherr so wenig, das Diestel eine solche Person sei, dass er sogar das ganz Spezielle hierüber herausfand: er war einer der Engel aus der Apokalypse, welche die Siegel brechen, und so gewiss war er hierüber, dass er den Namen Heinrich Diestel in Heinrich Siegelbrecher verwandelte. Dies habe ich von Diestel selbst, der freilich keinen Anstand genommen hat, vor einigen Jahren drucken zu lassen : er kenne das Schönherr'sche System gar nicht. Dieses System nun aber, wie er es nannte, diese Erkenntniss der Wahrheit gewährt Viel, ja Alles, wenn nur eine Bedingung erfüllt wurde : die unbedingte Annahme der Göttlichkeit, also nothwendig auch die unmittelbare Wahrheit derselben ; für sie durfte kein Beweis gefordert werden ; Unternehmungen der Art waren Werke des Teufels, da sie selbst der Beweis, und zwar der höchste, unmittelbarste, letzte war, mit ihr aber so hin und angenommen, konnte Alles bewiesen werden. Bestätigungen freilich, oder was nur so scheinen oder irgend wie dahin gewandt werden konnte, waren willkommen, wenn auch nicht nothwendig. Und aus dieser Quelle stammt Einiges in dieser Lehre, was mit wirklichen Thatsachen, wenn auch nur unvollständig aufgefassten, entstellten, oder mit physikalischen und philosophischen Theoremen, wenn auch falschen und längst widerlegten, einigen Zusammenhang hat. Unter den sehr wenigen Personen nämlich, die sich zu jener Zeit dem Schönherr angeschlossen hatten, war ein junger Mann, dem es damals schon an einigen, wenn auch nur unzusammenhängenden, nicht gehörig begründeten Naturkennt-

nissen nicht gänzlich gefehlt hat; es ist dies der jetzige Oberlehrer Bujack; dieser hat Manches supeditirt, das mehr oder weniger Schein hatte, und als ein Bemühen, wenigstens einige Rücksicht auf die Thatsachen der Beobachtung zu nehmen, das Ansehn haben kann. Bujack selbst übrigens, in der eigenen Bildung fortschreitend, hat sich längst von jenen Thorheiten und Schwindeleien abgelöst und zu einem achtungswerthen Gymnasiallehrer im Fache der elementaren Naturgeschichte entwickelt.

Auf Ebel aber musste dies Verhältniss ganz besonders und bestimmend wirken. Geistig sehr reizbar und aufgeregt, nach besonderer Bedeutsamkeit strebend, zur Theosophie (vielleicht schon durch eine erbliche Anlage) hinneigend, forschungs- und arbeits-süchtig, ohne Kenntniss wissenschaftlicher und eindringender Art von der Theologie, Philosophie, Natur etc.: dabei gewiss nicht ohne wahrhaftige religiöse Erregung, fand er hier Nahrung und verlockende Versuchung im Uebermasse. Es handelte sich zuvörderst um göttliche Dinge und ihre tiefsten Tiefen; diese durften nicht gesucht werden, denn sie waren eben alle schon gefunden und aufgedeckt. Man wusste mehr und Grösseres als die von der Finsterniss bedeckte Welt; man war im Geisterreiche bezeichnet, ausgezeichnet und auserwählt; völlige Dispensation von dem mühsamen Wege des Lernens, von dem Lehren, und überdies noch das Lockende und innerlich Stärkende, ja zum Trotz Anregende, das so häufig da gefunden wird, wo sich eine *ecclesia pressa* bildet. Denn in grosser und allgemeiner Missachtung als unwissender Schwärmer, ja als ein geistesverwirrter, still delirirender Mann stand Schönherr fast allgemein (in Leipzig hielt man es für rathsam, ihn in einer Irrenanstalt zu detiniren). Der Stolz, ja der Hochmuth sucht nicht ungern das Märtyrerthum, namentlich, wenn es ein nicht gar zu hartes ist; hier überdies war Tröstung und irdische Tröstung ganz in der Nähe: sollte nicht bald und hier auf Erden und von Königsberg aus das Reich Gottes mit einem überschwenglichen Masse von Genüssen des Leibes und der Seele beginnen? Sollten nicht die Hauptpersonem (und Andere gab es in diesem kleinen Kreise, "das kleine Häuflein," nicht) in einer Kürze von Freuden, Ehren und Herrlichkeit glänzen? Hie und da einige Missachtung zu tragen, war als letzte Gegenwehr, die der Teufel noch versuchte, eben nicht schwer; Bibelworte liessen sich ja dafür finden, und so war es ja so verheissen.

In solchen Verhältnissen und in solcher Richtung stand Ebel,

als er Landgeistlicher wurde. Dieser Wirkungskreis aber konnte seinen Wünschen nicht entsprechen. Das einfache Evangelium predigen? er hatte eine höhere Weisheit, die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit. Mit Landleuten konnte er das neue Reich aufzubauen nicht hoffen. Er bemühte sich, eine Stelle in der Stadt zu erhalten, und da die Prediger- und Religions-lehrerstelle am hiesigen Friedrichskollegium vakant wurde, bewarb er sich sehr angelegentlich darum, obwohl er seine ökonomische Stellung dadurch verschlimmerte. Nach einem schlecht überstandenen Examen gelangte er zu diesem Amte. Die Kirche dieser Anstalt, eigentlich nur für die Lehrer und Zöglinge derselben bestimmt, ist sehr klein, und, einigermassen von Anderen besucht, ist sie leicht gefüllt und bald überfüllt. Bald in der That war dies auch hier der Fall. Das kirchliche Verhältniss in hiesiger Stadt um jene Zeit war nämlich im Allgemeinen eben durch die vorangegangenen erschütternden Ereignisse des Krieges 1806–7 in eine innere Belebung jedenfalls, aber auch in eine äusserlich sich bezeugende gerathen. Ausser mehreren würdigen Geistlichen, die immer ein mehr oder minder bestimmtes Auditorium hatten, zog damals besonders der Konsistorialrath Krause, nachmaliger Grossherzoglich-Weimar'scher Generalsuperintendent, sehr Viele an. Seine Predigten, die in dogmatischer Richtung verschieden beurtheilt werden konnten, sprachen am Deutlichsten und Vornehmsten Etwas, dem Alle sich gern unterwerfen, aus, zu welchem das Menschengemüth einen unwiderstehlichen Zug hat, lautere Gottes- und Menschenliebe. Seine Vorträge aber, wie seine Wirkungsweise überhaupt waren ruhiger Art, betrachtend, ermahnend, selten rührend, nie erschütternd. Seine Predigten lehnten sich alle an Bibelwahrheiten und Bibelsprüche, aber sie waren nicht überschüttet mit Bibel- und Lieder-versen. Ganz anders war es mit den Predigten Ebel's. Hier sah man einen jungen, schönen, stark bis zur Leidenschaft aufgeregten Mann hintreten, vernahm ihn voll Eifer dringen auf das, was das ganze, volle, reine Christenthum genannt wurde; die Worte der Bibel selbst drängten einander, dazwischen immer Anführungen aus frommen Gesängen, entschiedenes Verwerfen alles desjenigen, was nicht eben Christenthum und seine wahre Erkenntniss ist, daher auch immerfort ein Ablehnen gegen alle Wissenschaft, die nicht Erkenntniss der Wahrheit sei. (Dieser Ausdruck, selbst ein biblischer, kam besonders häufig und geschärft vor.) Reden solcher Art, mit leidenschaftlicher Wärme, die nur zu leicht von

Rednern und Zuhörern für tiefe Begeisterung gehalten wird, vorge-
tragen, können nicht verfehlen, Eindruck zu machen, und das
thaten sie auch hier. Lernte man nun vollends Ebel persönlich
kennen—und dies war sehr leicht, denn er war überaus entgegen-
kommend—so befestigte und verstärkte sich jener Eindruck durch
einen entgegengesetzten. Denn in der persönlichen Berührung war
er voller Geschmeidigkeit und Fügsamkeit, Nichts von dogma-
tischer Narrheit, wo er keine Neigung dafür bemerkte; Nichts von
gewöhnlicher Orthodoxie, wo er mit nicht so Gesinnten zusamen-
traf; kurz, er wurde Jedem bequem, Jedem gewissermassen gerecht,
nur drang er überall auf die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit. Und was
ist billiger, und was muss mehr und williger zugegeben werden,
als eben dies, wenn man noch nicht weiss, was der tiefere Sinn, oder
eigentlich welche gänzliche Verzichtung auf Sinn überhaupt es ist,
die hinter jenem so harmlosen Ausdruck sich verbirgt? So erin-
nere ich mich, dass er mir in der ersten Zeit unserer Bekanntschaft,
da er mich vom Lobe Spinoza's, den ich eben damals zum ersten
Male näher kennen lernte, überströmen hörte, und namentlich den
frommen Sinn dieses verkannten und verfolgten Mannes hervor-
heben, theilnehmend sagte und zustimmend: meinen armen Vater
haben sie auch verfolgt, weil er einige spinozistische Ansichten
angenommen hatte. Bei reiferer Einsicht späterer Jahre bin ich
selbst von meinem Enthusiasmus für jenen ausgezeichneten Denker
zurückgekommen, bei näherer Bekanntschaft mit Ebel habe ich es
aber bestimmt genug gesehen, dass er nicht die entfernteste Kennt-
niss des Spinoza und seiner Philosophie, oder auch nur seines
Lebens hatte; damals aber machte es einen grossen, Herz gewin-
nenden Eindruck auf mich, einen strenggläubigen christlichen
Prediger mit so vieler Anerkennung von Spinoza sprechen zu hören.
Hie und da scheint er indess schon in jenen Zeiten sich von der
Behutsamkeit, die er so sehr cultivirt, entfernt zu haben; denn
während er noch Prediger und Religionslehrer am Friedrichs-
kollegium war, ist eine Untersuchung gegen ihn wegen seines
Schönherrianismus und wegen ungeziemend verächtlicher Aeusse-
rungen von der Kanzel her über die Wissenschaften und ihre Bestre-
bungen eingeleitet worden, doch ohne nachtheiligen Erfolg für ihn.

Bald darauf traf ihn sogar unter mehreren Kandidaten zu einer
Adjunctenstelle eines Diakonats an der hiesigen Altstädtischen
Kirche die Wahl. In dieser grossen Kirche wuchs auch die Zahl
seiner Zuhörer, ohne dass im Allgemeinen die öffentliche Appre-

hension wegen seines Zusammenhanges mit Schönherr sich verminderte. Dies geschah im Jahre 1816, und im darauf folgenden Jahre machte er in Gesellschaft Schönherr's und eines Lackfabrikanten Clemens eine Reise nach dem nördlichen Deutschland, wie es schien, auf Schönherr's Antrieb, um nachzuforschen, ob nicht weitere Verbindungen zur Verbreitung der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit anzuknüpfen seien. Dies fiel wohl ganz erfolglos aus, für Ebel aber war diese Reise erfolg- und folgenreich. Denn in Schlesien lernte er die Gräfin Ida v. d. Gröben kennen und begleitete sie von da zurück hierher in ihr väterliches Haus zum damaligen Landhofmeister und Oberpräsidenten v. Auerswald. Von dieser ausgezeichneten, sehr begabten Dame werde ich nachher näher sprechen müssen. Hier erinnere ich nur dies: ohne die Verbindung mit dieser Dame wäre Ebel nie das geworden, was er nachher nur zu sehr geworden ist: autokratisches Sectenhaupt. Denn Alles, was ihm ausser der Neigung und dem Hochmuth dazu fehlt, Entschlossenheit, Muth, Charakterstärke, das hat sie in reichem Maasse, und übertrug es durch beharrlichen Einfluss auf ihn und durch eine kühnmeisterliche Behandlung aller Anderen zu deren absoluter Unterwerfung unter Ebel, den sie selbst mit aller Aufrichtigkeit und Ueberzeugungsstärke nicht blos als ihren Herrn und Meister, sondern als Herrn und Meister schlechthin anerkannt; hierdurch, sage ich, fixirte sie ihn, und zwar ihn als besondere Person, die es nicht unterlassen dürfe, sich getlend zu machen, so wie die Andern vorweg ihn als diese Person zu erkennen und anzuerkennen. Hiervon jedoch wird weiter das Nähere und in seinem Zusammenhange mitgetheilt werden. Hier ist nur zu bemerken, dass hier ein Einschnitt in die ganze Entwicklung Ebel's und seiner mittel- und unmittelbaren Wirksamkeit eingetreten ist.

Die nächste Wirkung aber stellte sich dadurch heraus. Eben diese Gräfin v. d. Gröben hatte ihren Mann, preussischen Lieutenant, in der Schlacht bei Gr. Görschen (weon ich nicht irre) durch den Tod zu verlieren den tiefen Schmerz erfahren; Jahre lang noch hing sie diesem Schmerze, wie es schien, mit fester Entschliessung und in einer an's Melancholische gränzenden Weise nach. Sie war überhaupt in früherer Zeit romantischem und phantastischem Wesen sehr zugethan, und in dieser Art wurde nun auch die Trauer zu einem Kultus, der romantisch-phantastisch von ihr ausgeübt wurde. Ihre ganze edle Familie war in der grössten Sorge für und um sie, vermochte aber zu keinem ändernden Einflusse auf sie zu gelangen.

Diese Frau nun führte jetzt Ebel in den Kreis der Ihrigen zurück, aber als neue, kaum kenntliche Person, heiter, ruhig, hingebend, theilnehmend und ohne alle Romantik, ohne Phantasterei, scheinbar natürlich und kindlich.

Die Eltern, entzückt und überrascht durch diese Veränderung, fühlten sich zum grössten Danke gegen Ebel verpflichtet; denn von ihm, so sagte sie selbst, hatte sie Trost, Ruhe, Heiterkeit empfangen, und zwar eben durch seine religiöse Belehrung. In der Familie von Auerswald fand dies um so grösseren Anklang, als sie immer einen religiösen Zug gehabt und bewahrt hatte, und die Sache wurde bald zu einer gemeinsamen der höheren Familienkreise dieser Stadt. Ebel wurde ein Gegenstand ihrer besonderen Betrachtung, Berücksichtigung und vor Allem der Besprechung. Bis dahin war der nähere Umgang kein anderer als der mit den Freunden Schönherr's, diese aber bestanden aus einigen Handwerksleuten, Diestel, Graf von Kanitz und aus Damen, besonders dem Fräulein von Derschau, deren später nähere Erwähnung geschehen muss. Nun trat Ebel aber in mannigfachere Kreise, und vorzüglich in den der höheren Stände ein. Vielen vielleicht wäre dies lieb und erfreulich gewesen, Niemandem aber so sehr, als einem Manne wie Ebel — eben ihm selbst. Seine geheimsten und innigsten Wünsche gingen vor seinen Augen in Erfüllung; er erregte Aufmerksamkeit, er empfing Beweise persönlicher Anerkennung, und sein grösstes, ausgebildetstes Talent, die gesellschaftliche Geschmeidigkeit, konnte sich nun glänzend entfalten und neue Triumphe bereiten. Die Frau v. d. Gröben begann aber sogleich ihre grösste Thätigkeit für ihn; von seinem Lobe, von anbetender Bewunderung seiner Güte, Liebe und Frömmigkeit überströmte nun in den begeistertsten Ausdrücken ihr Mund, und doch Alles in einer Weise, wie es einer gebildeten und mit allen Vorzügen ihres höheren Standes ausgerüsteten Frau geziemend war, ohne irgend Verdacht erregen zu können. Was war nun natürlicher, als dass zunächst Frauen, namentlich aus den befreundeten adligen Kreisen, zu Ebel, zunächst in seine Kirche, dann auch in sein Haus geführt wurden? In dem Masse, als sich nun ein näherer und der Art nach gebildeter Kreis um Ebel versammelte, in demselben Masse bildete sich auch einige Spannung zwischen diesem und dem eigentlich Schönherrischen Kreise; denn seine Damen konnte Ebel doch nicht zu Schönherr führen, um dessen Abends begonnenen und oft gegen Morgen erst sich endenden Vorträgen beizuwohnen; auch konnte er sie der dort herrschenden

Disciplin nicht unterwerfen; denn etwas strenge scheint diese bei Schönherr allerdings gewesen zu sein, wenigstens war sie nicht so beschaffen, wie man sie für junge, fein gebildete Damen geeignet halten kann. Auf seine Autorität zu halten, fühlte Schönherr als Paraklet sich berechtigt, und die Freiheit, die er Anderen gestatete, bestand lediglich darin, dass sie, gleichfalls auserwählte, in der Apokalypse und anderen heiligen Schriften wohl bezeichnete Personen, hin und wieder einigen Einspruch thun, auch wohl eine halbe Nacht hindurch mit ihm selbst und untereinander heftig zanken durften, worauf sich dann aber Alles wieder in das alte Subordinationsverhältniss einfügen musste.

So wenigstens ist es mir in späteren Jahren—denn ich selbst habe Schönherr's Schwelle nie betreten—von Mitgliedern jenes Kreises erzählt worden. Tiefer aber lag noch ein anderer Grund zum Zerwürfniß zwischen Ebel und Schönherr. Ersterer sah sich allmählig in die günstige Lage versetzt, selbst Oberhaupt sein zu können, und eines aus edleren Gliedern, jedenfalls aus angeseheneren und angenehmeren Personen bestehenden Kreises; in diesem wurde ihm Verehrung, Unterwerfung, ja Anbetung entgegengebracht; dort sollte er ein unus ex multis sein, und unter welchen! Da sollte er neben einem Handschuhmacher, Kupferschmid, Lackfabrikanten, Victualienhändler u. s. w. sitzen und sich mit diesen, zuweilen von diesen ausschelten lassen; denn auf Standesverschiedenheit legt Ebel einem besonderen Werth; in späteren Jahren hörte ich selbst mit Mehreren von ihm sagen: Christus habe es schlimmer als er gehabt, der habe mit ungebildeten Leuten der untersten Volksklasse umgehen müssen, er aber habe Grafen, Gräfinnen u. s. w. um sich. Auf solche Weise und aus solchen Gründen häuften sich denn immer die Reibungsmomente, bis endlich im Jahre 1819 Ebel sich von Schönherr völlig trennte, die beiden Vornehmen jenes Kreises, den Grafen von Kanitz und das Fräulein von Derschau mit sich nehmend, wie sie immer ganz besonders seiner Person angeschlossen waren.

Nun fing Ebel an gegen Schönherr zu predigen (seine persönlichen Angelegenheiten, die er für identisch mit denen Gottes hielt, wurden alle Zeit von der Kanzel her wie in den häuslichen Zusammenkünften verhandelt, mit dem Unterschiede nur, dass in der Kirche die sogenannten draussen Stehenden nicht recht merken konnten, worauf es gehe, wer gezüchtigt, wer gezeißelt ward.) Nichts war gegen seine Lehre, diese wurde vielmehr durchaus

festgehalten und immer mehr nach ihrer ganzen abenteuerlichen Grundlage ausgebildet—aber gegen seinen Bart (er trug einen sehr langen und in der That schönen,) gegen seinen Rock (der einen eigenen Schnitt, eine eigene Zusammenfügung hatte, wie dies Schönherr als seiner geistigen Würde für angemessen und nothwendig erforscht hatte,) gegen die Sonderbarkeiten seiner äusseren Erscheinung überhaupt, aber auch gegen seine Herrschsucht, Unduldsamkeit, Heftigkeit u. s. w. Das Reich war nun jedenfalls getheilt, die Parteien standen sich feindlich gegenüber, Gemeinsames hatten sie nur am Lehrsystem; wo aber die Kraft und die Möglichkeit eines äusseren Gelingens gesetzt war, konnte nicht gezweifelt werden. Dazu kommt noch, dass Schönherr ein viel zu gradsinniger, aufrichtiger und im ganzen zu nobler Mann war, um sich irgend unedler Mittel für seine Zwecke zu bedienen; allmählig fiel Alles von ihm ab, bis auf ihn selber; denn er beharrte bei sich bis an's Ende, ja im Todesmomente versicherte er fest: ihn könne der leibliche so wenig als der geistige Tod treffen, er sei ja der Mensch gewordene Paraklet, er werde nur umkleidet, nicht entkleidet.

Ebel aber richtete sein Reich nun mit vieler Klugheit ein; zuvörderst bemerkte er sehr richtig, dass, um Zwist und Zerwürfniß zu vermeiden, Nichts von vorneherein wirksamer sein könne, als keinen Widerspruch aufkommen zu lassen. Und dies war anfänglich um so leichter zu erreichen, da der Kreis ausser den Damen, die zu keinem Widerspruch, sondern nur zur innigsten Anhänglichkeit für Ebel gestimmt waren, nur aus Kanitz bestand, wenn man nämlich von den näher Unterrichteten der eigentlichen Verhältnisse sprechen soll. Kanitz ist aber seiner ganzen Natur nach zu Nichts so sehr geeignet, als zu einem Anhänger, da man nicht weniger selbstständig sein kann, als er es eben ist. Ueberdies war Anfangs Alles voller Lieblichkeit und Freundlichkeit, und wo einmal die Lehre als Unantastbares, Unzweifelhaftes feststand, zu einem Widerspruche nicht leicht eine Veranlassung. Es musste nun aber festgestellt werden, wer denn die Person des Ebel sei, d. h., welche Stelle er im Geisterreiche, im Universum, also nothwendig zunächst im Reiche Gottes einnehme. Dass es eine der höchsten sein müsse, verstand sich von selbst und aus der ganzen Lehre; Ebel selbst sagte: wie sollte ich denn wissen, wie die Welt geschaffen ist, wenn ich nicht dabei gegenwärtig gewesen wäre?

Da er nun jenes wusste, so konnte es auch an diesem nicht

gefehlt haben. Es lag nahe, dass er eine Person aus der Trinität sein müsste; der Vater aber konnte er nicht sein; denn der bleibt ewig in sich selbst verborgen, er ist ja übrigens auch das erste Urwesen (Feuer,) das in keine Umbildung seiner selbst eingehen könne; einen Paraklet gab es schon, wenn man **auch einräumen** musste, dass er sich seiner Würde und seiner Bestimmung unwürdig, wenigstens dermalen erwiesen habe, aber er kann ja wohl noch umkehren, und man müsse, dass dies geschehe, für ihn beten. (Man hat allerdings, überdenkt man dergleichen mit Ruhe und im Zusammenhange, Ursache, über das Mass der Verirrung und der geistigen Vermessenheit zusammenzuschauern; denn während die Gläubigen der christlichen Kirche flehen, dass der heilige Geist sie vertrete und für sie beim Vater beten möge, wurde hier von schwachen, sündhaften, an Haupt und Gliedern kranken Menschen gebetet—für den heiligen Geist selbst! Und dabei und darin eben erschienen sie sich barmherzig, versöhnlich und liebend!) Es konnte also die Person Ebel's keine andere sein als die Christi. Herausgefunden hatte dies zuerst das Fräulein von Derschau (nachher Gräfin von Kanitz); mit freudiger Zustimmung als unmittelbar evident wurde es aufgenommen von der Frau Gräfin von der Gröben; von Kanitz war kein Widerspruch zu erwarten. Nackt und unumwunden wurde dies indess nicht Allen ausgesprochen, es hiess nur: Ebel sei der Repräsentant des Heiligen und Reinen im Universum, er sei der vollkommene Mensch, und zwar sei dies seine neue Natur. In diesen verhüllenden Ausdrücken jedoch liegt nicht nur jene Bestimmung, dass Ebel nämlich der zu unserer Zeit erschienene Christus sei, sondern noch mehr eingeschaltet, dass er der höher ausgebildete, vollendete Christus sei! Hiermit aber verhüllt es sich der Lehre nach so: der zuerst erschienenene Christus sei nur zum Theil Mensch geworden, seiner Geburt nach nämlich aus der Maria, aber von keinem Menschen gezeugt; da aber der Gottessohn auch vollkommener Menschensohn werden muss, so muss ein Christus von einem Menschenpaare gezeugt werden; dieser Gezeugte aber muss, was durch die menschliche Zeugung ihm Sündhaftes an- und eingeboren ist, von sich abstreifen, und hiezu bedarf es der Hilfe, des Beistandes und der Kraft aus dem zwar nicht vollkommenen, aber gekreuzigten und versöhnenden Christus. Hat nun der neue Christus es dahin gebracht, diese seine neue Natur anzuziehen, so ist er der reine und heilige und vollkommene Mensch. Er darf aber ja nicht

wieder von Anfechtungen aus der alten Natur sich bestricken lassen. Und hierüber wachten in der That mit der äussersten Sorgfalt die beiden genannten Damen über Ebel. Dieser nämlich behauptete immer, seine alte Natur bestände in der Unsicherheit des Gemüths, Unterwürfigkeit u. s. w. Daher durfte er dann, wenn er seine neue Natur behaupten sollte, sich nur als fest, bestimmt und als Herr zeigen. Und in Wahrheit, er gewann hierin eine grosse Fertigkeit! Was er nun auf diese Weise that, das war eben, weil es in dieser Weise geschah, also aus der neuen Natur, rein und selig. Noch eine andere Frage darüber zu thun, einen anderen Prüfstein zu gebrauchen, war schlechthin unstatthaft, weil es ein innerer Widerspruch gewesen wäre; wo sollte denn ein Kriterium über das Heilige und Reine hieraus hergenommen werden?

Eine andere Frage aber ist die, was denn nun die Aufgabe dieses Reinen und Heiligen in der That sei, was er thun, wodurch er seine göttliche Natur vollziehen, diese selbst bewähren solle. Aber dies ist vielmehr gar keine Frage: was konnte der Reine und Heilige Anderes thun, als reinigen und heiligen? und was konnte seine Sendung sonst bewähren als Reinigung und Heiligung? Und ebenso wenig kann es, wenn man nur die Grundlage des Lehrsystems, das ja die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit selbst ist, kennt, zweifelhaft bleiben, welches das nächste Thun, das wichtigste Geschäft dieser Person sein müsse. Alles Uebel ist ja in die Welt gekommen lediglich dadurch, dass der Teufel das zweite (weibliche) Urwesen, Finsterniss, Wasser, verführt, von den Einflüssen des ersten Urwesens abgewendet hat; (denn woher der Teufel selbst gekommen, was ihn verführte, danach fragt kein Mensch, oder es wird ihm geantwortet: der Hochmuth; aus sich selbst musste geantwortet werden, wenn geantwortet werden sollte; aber man bedenke, was darin liegt: aus sich selbst!) Alles Uebel also durch die Verführung des weiblichen durch einen teuflischen Einfluss des männlichen, alle Rettung also durch Reinigung und Heiligung des Weiblichen, durch einen göttlichen männlichen Einfluss. Hiernach nun verstand sich eben nach dem Lehrsysteme Vieles, was die Ausführung anlangt, von selbst. Zuvörderst konnte es nicht die Meinung sein, dass Ebel als die bestimmte Person des Heiligen und Reinen alle Frauenzimmer selbst heiligen und reinigen kann, sondern nur die weiblichen Hauptnaturen; diese aber waren nicht fern zu suchen; es waren natürlich diejenigen, die

sich zu ihm gefunden und im Laufe der Zeit sich um ihn versammelt hatten. Drei hervorragende weibliche Wesen, die eben als solche betrachtet wurden, welche schlechthin zu Ebel gehörten, waren aber in dieser Hinsicht besonders zu berücksichtigen, da sie als Hauptnaturen die Wirkung weiter tragen sollten; es waren dies die Frau v. d. Gröben, seine Frau als Lichtnatur; Fräulein Emilie von Schrötter, seine Frau als Finsternissnatur; und seine ange- traute Frau, welche die Umfassung (ein Ausdruck, der viel bedeuten, und oft aus der tiefsten Noth der Begriffslosigkeit helfen musste) sein sollte. Ausserdem wurden nun noch viele andere weibliche Wesen, insofern sie der bestimmten Heiligung und Reinigung bedurften, nicht abgewiesen, auch dazu angehalten, wie eben die verstorbene Gräfin von Kanitz (früher Fräulein v. Derschau), Maria Consentius und nicht wenige Andere. Sodann war es auch einleuchtend, wie diese Acte der Heiligung und Reinigung zu vollbringen seien: es musste auf urwesentliche Weise, aber von dem Reinen und Heiligen und an einer nach der Reinigung und Heiligung Verlangenden geschehen. Die urwesentliche Weise aber ist die geschlechtliche, das Reinigende ist das freie und klare Bewusstsein. Die Acte mussten also geschlechtliche Beziehung haben, und es musste dabei geredet werden; denn das ist Bewusstsein. Das Geschlechtliche aber darf nicht bis zur Zeugung getrieben werden; denn nicht diese zunächst, sondern die Uebung im Urwesentlichen auf reine und reinigende Weise war die Absicht. Also nur bis zur Zeugung hin.— Sodann begriff es sich auch, dass diese Acte nur mit denjenigen Damen vorgenommen werden konnten, die nicht bloss erst unterrichtet und eingeweiht waren, sondern sie mussten auch ihre Sünden und namentlich in Beziehung auf geschlechtliche Neigungen, Versuchungen u. s. w. bekannt, und auf alle Weise sich als untergeben, willig und abhängig bewiesen haben. Endlich aber war es auch einsichtlich, dass die Acte nicht mit weiblichen Personen vorgenommen werden konnten und durften, die eben in weiblicher, d. h. in geschlechtlicher Beziehung keiner Zurechtstellung bedurften, weil sie eben in geschlechtlicher Rücksicht nicht mehr Frauen waren, also weder mit alten noch mit älteren. Mit solchen wurde dergleichen nicht nur nicht gethan, sondern darüber gegen sie vollkommenes Geheimniss beobachtet, weil sie es nicht würden verstehen können.

Bei der Aufgabe, die ich mir hier gestellt habe, eine sehr verwickelte und verworrene Sache in ihren psychologischen Momenten

nachzuweisen, war der eben erörterte Punct derjenige, den in's Wort zu fassen mich die grösste Ueberwindung gekostet hat ; denn ekelhaft und widerwärtig in der Erscheinung, gräuelhaft dem Wesen nach, aller Vernunft und unverzerrtem natürlichem Gefühl empörend, ist dieser Vorgang dennoch, was die Frauen anlangt, nicht nur nicht aus sündlichem fleischlichem Gelüste, ja nicht nur aus guter und frommer Absicht hervorgegangen, sondern (und dies ist meine innerste, auf genaue Kenntniss der Personen gegründete Ueberzeugung) eine Verirrung, in die unedle weibliche Gemüther gar nicht gerathen können, sondern eben nur edle, hochbegabte und zur grössten Selbstverleugnung durch tiefe Religiosität fähig gewordene. Wäre von Abwägung der Schuld die Rede, könnte hiervon unter Menschen überall die Rede sein, so müsste das Nichtschuldig über die Frauen ganz unbedenklich ausgesprochen werden ; denn zur grössten Versündigung haben nicht nur die feinsten Fäden, sondern die edelsten Regungen hingeführt, und Alles ist im Gefühl der Selbstverleugnung um der Wahrheit, um Gottes willen geschehen. Und in der That könnte dem Richter, der ein Urtheil aussprechen und deshalb auch die Verhältnisse innerlich erkennen muss, nichts Störenderes, nichts sein Urtheil Trübenderes begegnen, als wenn ihm ein Gefühl von Missachtung gegen die in Rede stehenden Frauen erwachsen sollte ; nothwendig würde ihm hiermit sogleich der richtige Einblick in das wahre Verhältniss desjenigen, was das Thun und was das Leiden, das Wollen und das Handeln gewesen ist, sich schliessen, oder wenigstens verwirren und unsicher werden müssen. Ich kann aber mit der freien Aussprache dieser meiner Ueberzeugung nicht so verstanden, oder vielmehr so völlig missverstanden werden, als gedächte ich damit eine Vertheidigung in objectiver Hinsicht in Beziehung der Frauen zu übernehmen, oder die Schädlichkeit und Verderblichkeit eines solchen Verhältnisses irgend wie verkleinern zu wollen. Niemand kann mehr überzeugt sein, wie entartend und entartet dieses sei, an welchen Abgrund jene Frauen in der That geführt seien. Das aber sage ich, und von dessen Wahrheit durchdringend überzeugt, dass in subjectiver Beziehung die Frauen schuldlos sind, dass sie in ihrem Wollen und Bestreben zu den edlen und verehrlichsten ihres Geschlechts gehören. Hinzufügen aber muss ich auch und mit der gleichen Festigkeit der auf die speciellste Personenkenntniss begründeten Ueberzeugung, dass es ein grosses Glück sei, ja, dass Gott sehr zu danken sei, dass es

nicht zu grösseren Gräueln, nicht zu den schrecklichsten Handlungen gekommen ist.

Denn es unterliegt, kennt man eben die Personen in ihrer ganzen, wahren Eigenthümlichkeit, nicht dem mindesten Zweifel, dass diese Damen (namentlich aber die Frau Gräfin von der Gröben, die edelste Natur von Allen) jede Handlung, und auch die Schauer erregendsten zu vollziehen geneigt sein würden, wenn Ebel sie ihnen ernstlich geböte; ja, sie würden es mit Freuden thun, und jede innere Regung dagegen als Sünde, als Versuchung des Teufels betrachten und besiegen. Was Ebel ihnen zu verschweigen aufgiebt, wird keine Inquisition und keine Tortur ihnen über die Lippen bringen. Ich verkenne nicht das hohe Maass des Fanatismus, der in diesen Personen ausgebildet ist, ich verkenne nicht seine Schauer erregende, Alles zertrümmernde Kraft, ich anerkenne aber die ursprünglich edlen Motive und beklage aus tiefstem Herzen, dass edle Hingebung so sehr ihren wahren, würdigenden und adelnden Gegenstand verfehlt hat.

Nach dieser Zwischenbemerkung, die ich für nothwendig hielt, und von der ich wünschen muss, dass sie den Richter innerlich nicht unberührt lassen möchte, kann ich, zufrieden, das Widerstrebendste des Ganzen abgethan zu haben, in meiner Darstellung fortfahren. Wenn nun das Nächste und Wichtigste des heiligen und reinen Ebel (man überwinde mit mir den Widerwillen gegen diese Identifizirung; denn sie ist, eben wenn die Darstellung so billig und richtig als möglich vom Standpunkte jener gegebenen Grundverirrung ausgemacht werden soll, nothwendig) auf die Frauen und die Reinigung der Frauen als zweiten Urwesens, in das eben die Sünde eingedrungen, gerichtet ist, wenn dieses nur nach ertheilter Belehrung u. s. w. durch die bestimmten, stufenweise fortschreitenden geschlechtlichen Acte bis zur Zeugung hin geschehen kann, so entsteht die Frage: was hat er denn mit den Männern zu thun? An sie—das ist die einfache Antwort—hat er die Lehre zu bringen, sie zu ermahnen, sie inne werden zu lassen, dass sie aus dem zweiten verführten Urwesen geboren sind und somit die Sünde substantiell in sich tragen, sie zu schelten, heftig zu schelten, aber auch ihnen zu schmeicheln, sie zu ermuntern, und sie zu vestigiren, wenn sie zu Etwas zu gebrauchen sind, und da dies Letztere niemals im Voraus zu bestimmen ist, so nur einstweilen zu fixiren. Das am Besten Berechnete aber hierbei war, dass er selbst in der That mit Männern sich am Wenigsten zu thun

machte, sondern sie an die Frauen wies, sie diesen zur Leitung übergab. Diese wurden zuvörderst als die Geförderten betrachtet, und da hiess es denn : hie gilt es nicht Mann noch Frau, sondern nur christliche Erfahrung und tiefe Erkenntniss ; wer hierin weiter ist, der kann dem Andern rathen, ihn weisen und leiten, und es ist dessen Pflicht, wenn es ihm um wahres Christenthum zu thun ist, sich jenem unterzuordnen, sei es Mann oder Frau. Von dem Gebote und Verbote : „*taceat mulier in ecclesia*,“ konnte hier schon deshalb nicht die Rede sein, weil nicht blos ohne Frauen hier keine Kirche gewesen wäre, sondern in Wahrheit diese Kirche nur von Frauen geleitet wurde, da genau genommen, Ebel selbst das, was er geworden, nur durch Hingebung und Bestimmung der Frauen geworden ist, freilich in ganz anderer Art und Weise als bei den übrigen. Von der Praxis, die nach und nach in diesem Kreise ausgebildet und methodisch strenge gehandhabt worden ist, wird später zusammenhängend gesprochen werden ; hier kommt est nur darauf an, nachzuweisen, was aus der Weisung der Männer an die Frauen und durch die Unterordnung jener unter diese (wovon nur selten und nur für einzelne Momente Ausnahme gemacht wurde) entstanden und für Ebel und seine Zwecke gewonnen wurde. Zunächst nämlich war wohl hierdurch am Besten gesorgt, für die Einübung der höchsten Verehrung und des tiefsten Gehorsams für die Person Ebel's ; sodann aber war eben das, was an einer solchen Stellung der Männer zu den Frauen als Verkehrung erscheinen kann und es in der That auch ist, die wahre Zurechtstellung für jenen Kreis. Wenn Männer von Frauen über die unentweichlichsten Probleme der Philosophie belehrt werden sollten, so verstand es sich gleich von selbst, dass die Männer Alles, was sie sonst durch Gelehrsamkeit, Forschung, eignes Studium wussten und hatten, bei Seite liegen lassen mussten ; dies sind nicht Waffen, die Frauen respectiren können, besonders nicht lehrende Frauen ; all dergleichen vielmehr musste vorweg als eitle Weisheit der verfinsterten Welt, als gelehrter Plunder weggeschoben sein und bleiben. Hiermit war denn sogleich Alles aus den Händen gewunden, wodurch die Abenteuerlichkeit der zu lehrenden Lehre hätte von vorn herein zertrümmert werden können. Sodann wurde jene Art des Unterordnungsverhältnisses für nöthig gefunden, weil es das Geeignetste ist zur Demüthigung, diese aber selbst das Nöthigste sei. Dass die Frauen dadurch hochmüthig gemacht wurden, war kein Einwand, da sie schon demüthig waren. Ferner wenn Männer Frauen

Sündenbekenntnisse in den nacktesten, schärfsten Ausdrücken ablegen sollten, wenn dies wie natürlich vorzüglich über die Grundverderbniss, die geschlechtliche geschehen musste, so stellte sich dadurch sogleich ein Verhältniss ein, das das unnatürlichste an sich und die Scham auf alle Weise zerstörend hier zum natürlichen wurde, das eben, weil es aller Natur widersprach, eben als die neue Natur begründend angesehen, gelobt und auf alle Weise gefördert wurde. Je überströmender man in dieser Hinsicht war, je empörenderer Ausdrücke man sich bediente, desto höher wurde man gestellt, desto mehr als im wahren Ernst der Heilung stehend wurde man betrachtet. Schien das Bekannte nicht wichtig, d. h. nicht arg genug, so erregte das Unzufriedenheit und wurde ein Festhalten am Argen, ein Unterhandeln mit dem Teufel, Lauheit, ärger als kalt und warm genannt, und nun begann das heftigste und andringendste Pressen auf andere und geschärfte Bekenntnisse. Kamen solche hervor, so wurde Gott gepriesen, der das Herz eines Verstockten erweicht hatte. Wollte man daher Ruhe, um nicht zu sagen Ruhm erlangen, so blieb nichts Anderes übrig, als allenfalls die Phantasie zu Hilfe zu nehmen und erdichtete Sünden als wirkliche zu bekennen, ja, es wurden von den Damen sogar Sünden proponirt, die man begangen haben möchte, und die nun als begangen zu beichten waren.— Wenigstens ist es mir—das darf ich bei Gott dem Allerheiligsten versichern— so ergangen; ich habe Sünden mündlich und schriftlich bekannt, die ich nie begangen, die mir zu bekennen von den Gräfinnen v. d. Gröben und von Kanitz aufgegeben wurde, zu denen sie mir die Ausdrücke, in denen sie bekannt werden müssten, theils genannt, theils, wenn ich sie nicht scharf genug getroffen hatte, corrigirt und emendirt haben. Unter welchen Umständen dies geschehen sei, wird weiter unten näher angegeben werden. Welch ein Verhältniss der Abhängigkeit hiedurch aber geknüpft, ja wie sklavisch gebunden man dadurch werden, welche Herrschaft der Herrschenden hierdurch begründet werden musste, das bedarf wohl gar keiner Erwähnung. Zwei andere Momente müssen aber hiemit noch in Verbindung gebracht werden. Einmal nämlich konnte es nicht ausbleiben, dass bei einer solchen Stellung der Frauen, bei den Lehren des Systems über die geschlechtlichen Verhältnisse und bei der Methode, diese in der Liebe zu reinigen und zu heiligen, bei der völligen Niedergerissenheit aller gewöhnlichen Schranken der Sitte und in Wahrheit auch der Sittlichkeit, bei der Freiheit, die die Damen nicht bloß gestatteten und gewährten,

sondern zum Theil sogar anboten und lehrten, bei alle dem, was man Unverzwängtheit, Wesenheit und zur Freiheit der Kinder Gottes gehörig nannte—bei alle dem, sage ich, konnte es nicht ansbleiben, dass in Zeiten, in welchen man nicht gequält wurde, man nicht von innerem Ekel und Verdruss (die man aber innerlichst verschlossen halten musste) gequält war, nicht Regungen und Aeusserungen sinnlicher Begierde sich einstellen sollten, denen zwar die ehrendsten Namen beigelegt wurden, die dadurch aber nicht aufhörten zu sein, was sie eben sind. Schon das unaufhörliche starke Küssen und Umarmen, das gang und gebe war, die ungenirte Art der körperlichen Annäherung auch da, wo von geschlechtlichen Uebungen zur Heiligung keine Rede war, sondern zu der gewöhnlichen Art des Zusammenseins gehörte (denn in Gegenwart irgend eines Fremden, draussen Stehenden trat das förmlichste und zierlichste Ceremoniell ein), schon dies konnte nicht verschlen, jene Wirkung sinnlicher Erregung auszuüben, zumal viele der Frauen mit vielen Reizen des Aeusseren wie des Geistes ausgestattet waren. Wer etwa sagen wollte, es sei ihm hierin anders ergangen, von dem scheint es mir, dass er sich belüge oder wenigstens täusche. Ich glaube nicht, dass es irgend Jemanden gebe, der die gewöhnlichen sittigen und sittlichen Schranken als für sich überflüssig erachten dürfte. Das andere Moment aber ist dies; dadurch, dass die Männer den Frauen überwiesen waren zur Leitung und Belehrung, hatte Ebel für seine Person den Vortheil, ganz in der Entfernung bleiben zu können, von jedem Conflict frei zu bleiben und scheinbar eben nur geschehen zu lassen. Genaueste Kunde musste ihm ja doch über Alles gegeben werden, nur blieb es ihm bei der Verhandlungsweise ganz frei gelassen, ob und wie viel directen Antheil er an einer Verhandlung nehmen wollte. Gesah es z. B., dass sich einmal die Verhältnisse der persönlichen Verhandlung ungünstig verwickeln wollten, drohte etwa ein Verlust, so trat er mit überschüttender Freundlichkeit und Liebkosung ein, alle Verwicklung wegschiebend, den ganzen Gegenstand fallen lassend, und Alles in lauter Lieblichkeit und Rührung auflösend. Schien es dagegen ein anderes Mal, dass ein verstärkter und stärkster Angriff nothwendig sei, dann schritt er zornvoll, heftig, auf's Aeussertse erregt, mit Höllestrafen und Verdammung um sich schleudernd ein. Mit einem Worte, er hatte durch diese Anordnung am Besten für das gesorgt, was seine bewundernswürdig ausgebildete Taktik ist,—das persönliche Reserviren. Geschehen

musste ja doch immer, was er wollte, und wie er wollte. Noch andere Vortheile geringerer, doch nicht zu verschmähender Art erwachsen ihm aus dieser Stellung. Um die Verbindung mit Männern, namentlich mit gelehrten oder überall ausgebildeten und unterrichteten war es ihm eigentlich sehr zu thun; theils sollte dadurch sein Ruf als wenig unterrichteter, hohlschwärmender Mann widerlegt werden, theils sollte durch sie seine Lehre mit Gelehrsamkeit und gutem Ansehen wohl aptirt, nach aussen getragen werden und verbreitet. Hatten ihm nur die Damen solche Leute gut zugerichtet, d. h. so, dass sie geneigt schienen, den Inhalt ihres Wissens aufzugeben, die Form aber beizubehalten für einen anderen Inhalt, eben die Schönherr-Ebel'sche Lehre, so waren sie höchst brauchbar. Ebel selbst wollte daher nicht gern gegen Gelehrsamkeit ankämpfen, er wollte sie vielmehr in Dienst nehmen, aber die Diener mussten ihm fertig geliefert werden. Ja, einige Kleinigkeiten nahm er gleich und mit Herablassung an. Er hat Mehreres drucken lassen, Predigten u. s. w.; bei mehreren befinden sich Beilagen, Excuse, z. B. exegetische Bemerkungen über Stellen des alten und neuen Testaments; er versteht aber schlechthin Nichts vom Griechischen, und Hebräisch kann er nicht lesen; er gestattet es Andern, diese gelehrten Bemerkungen auszuarbeiten, versteht sich in seinem Sinn, und sie wurden auf seinen Namen gedruckt. Ebenso ist es mit Citaten aus Philosophen, neueren Schriftstellern, ja mit der Sprache selbst, die druckfähig zu machen, immer nicht unwesentlicher Verbesserungen bedurfte. Diese wurden aber meistens von den Damen, namentlich von der Gräfin von der Gröben, die ein nicht geringes Talent zur sprachlichen Darstellung besitzt, besorgt. Treten nun aus diesen Verhältnissen, Ansichten und Verfahrensweisen genug Elemente hervor und zusammen, die das Bedenkliche und Verderbliche des Ganzen hinreichend erkennbar machen, so wurde Alles noch mehr verschlimmert durch die verkehrteste Ansicht einer an sich vielleicht rein biblischen Lehre, der vom Teufel. Es ist nicht meine Aufgabe, über diese Lehre ein Urtheil auszusprechen; mir selbst scheint sie in den Worten der Bibel enthalten zu sein, ich weiss aber auch, dass es sehr fromme christliche Gottesgelehrte, Bibelgläubige Theologen gegeben hat, die die Lehre vom Teufel nicht nur nicht mit der Vernunft, sondern auch nicht mit der heiligen Schrift und der Liebe Gottes zu vereinigen gewusst und daher lieber den Teufel, als Vernunft,

Schrift und die innige Ueberzeugung von der Liebe Gottes aufgegeben haben. Doch wie es sich damit verhalten mag, so viel scheint jedenfalls gewiss, dass es immer ein bedenkliches Zeichen ist, wenn ein Geistlicher fort und fort den Teufel citirt, mehr von ihm als von Christo spricht. Giebt es einen Teufel noch jetzt, und ist er immer noch, auch nach der Erscheinung Christi und der weiten Verbreitung des Christenthums so sehr mächtig, so werden Menschen ihn wohl nicht überwinden, und jedenfalls ist's zweifelhaft, ob die strengen Vertreter der Existenz des Teufels die innigsten Verehrer und Diener Christi sind. Doch auch dies kann hier ganz dahin gestellt sein; denn Ebel und diejenigen, die ihm folgen, machen von dieser Lehre eine Anwendung eigener Art. Zwei Eigenschaften des Teufels seien es, die ganz besonders aufgefasst und berücksichtigt werden müssten: dass er listig und der Lügner von Haus aus ist. Durch List verführte er das zweite Urwesen, durch sie und durch seine Lügen berückt er noch immer fort die Menschen und hält sie in der Finsterniss. Seid listig wie die Schlangen, war Ebel's Wahlspruch und sein Losungswort; denn von dem erklärenden Zusatze: „und ohne Falsch wie die Tauben," davon durfte bei ihm, da es sich von selbst verstand, nicht die Rede sein. Zu belehren und zu bessern ist der Teufel nicht, überlisten muss man ihn! Ihm Wahrheit entgegenstellen ist thörichte Einfalt, er kennt ja eigentlich die Wahrheit, aber will sie nicht; man muss ihn hintergehen und belügen und eben dadurch Gott dienen. Würde Jemand, der es leibhaft mit dem Teufel zu thun hätte, sich solcher Waffen und Vertheidigungsmittel bedienen, so könnte das immer geschehen und der Erfolg abgewartet werden. Wird diese Taktik aber so gebraucht, dass man den Zwischensatz als Axiom eingeschoben hat: die Menschen, so lange sie noch nicht die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit haben, d. h. so lange sie noch nicht die Lehre, die in diesem Kreise mit jenem Namen belegt worden ist, angenommen haben, stehen nicht blos in der Anfechtung vom Teufel, sondern in seiner Macht; man muss also, eben um sie zu retten und aus ihnen Kinder Gottes zu machen, den Teufel in ihnen bekämpfen, gegen welchen sie selbst ganz ohnmächtig sind, ihn entweder gar nicht kennend, oder ihn wohl gar verleugnend; so muss man eben sie selbst mit den Waffen gegen den Teufel behandeln, bis sie die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit gewonnen, d. h. angenommen und dadurch zum selbständigen Kampfe gegen den Feind ausgerüstet und zum gewissen

Siege tüchtig gemacht sind. Es ist also ein ganz einfaches Dilemma gestellt: entweder die Wahrheit, d. h. jene Erkenntniss mit ihren Geheimnissen, ihren Aufschlüssen, ihren Waffen wird angenommen; oder diese Wahrheit mit ihren Attributen und Eigenschaften sind die Menschen, wie sie nun eben sind, und ohne viele Vorbereitung anzunehmen, ja zu ertragen nicht fähig; so lange aber dies nicht ist, stehen sie unwiderruflich, nothwendig und wehrlos unter der Herrschaft des Teufels. Es bleibt demnach Nichts übrig als das Zweite zu jenem Dilemma: man muss den Teufel in ihnen bekämpfen, und zwar, so wie es ihm gebührt. Wahrheit braucht er nicht, denn er kennt, aber will sie nicht, ja er missbraucht sie, wenn er nur irgend kann; überlisten muss man ihn und so ihn mit sich selber schlagen; ein Lügner ist er: wohl, er muss überboten und getäuscht werden. — Die Wahrheit ist Gottes, die Lüge ist des Teufels, Jedem also das Seinige; den Teufel mit Wahrheit angehen und bedienen, heisst Gott verachten, und ihm seinen Theil, das ihm gebührende versagen, während den Teufel überlisten und belügen, Gott dienen und ihm das Seinige darbringen heisst. Es mus bei diesem Allen unvergessen bleiben, dass diese Taktik eben gegen die Menschen, gegen alle Menschen, die nicht die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit haben, anzunehmen sei. Welch ein Abgrund eröffnete sich hier! Und doch überredet man sich, so in der Wahrheit zu stehen, in der Liebe zu handeln, und das Wohlgefallen Gottes sich sicher zu erwerben. Was nun Ebel anlangt, so ist seine Stellung diese: er ist der vollkommene Mensch, der Heilige und Reine, er hat die Wahrheit zum vollkommenen Theil, er ist sie. Ihm zur Seite stehen immer einige Auserwählte, sie haben die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit von ihm erhalten, sie sind von ihm geheiligt worden, sie erfüllen ihre Bestimmung, nicht nur Berufene, sondern Auserwählte, deren ja nur wenige sind, zu sein; ihre Namen werden einst glänzen, und ihrer ist die Herrlichkeit. Ihm (Ebel) gegenüber steht die Welt; zunächst die Natur, aber nur durch die Sünde der Menschen seufzende Kreatur; sodann aber die Menschen selbst, aber geblendet oder verfinstert, was eines ist, durch den Teufel, der sich ja auch als Engel des Lichts kleiden und wenn möglich, die Auserwählten selbst zum Falle bringen könne. Nun behauptet er freilich gar nicht, dass es nicht unter diesen vielen Menschen auch viele Berufene, Edelbegabte und durch den Geist mannigfach Erregte und Angezogene gebe, aber um so unglücklicher sind sie; denn eben sie

werden von dem Feinde um so leichter getäuscht; er lässt ihnen eine gewisse Frömmigkeit, ein gewisses Christenthum, einen gewissen Eifer — aber Alles nur ohne und jenseits der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit, und so ist denn doch Alles vergeblich und todt und eine leichte Beute des Teufels. Darum hoffte er immer und die Seinen mit ihm, es werde in einer Kürze (über die aber schon viele Zeit vergangen ist) sich ein besonders göttliches Wunderzeichen an ihm offenbaren, damit die Besseren wenigstens, die ihrer Natur nach Berufenen und noch nicht Verstockten inne werden, wer er sei, und dass in ihm die Wahrheit selbst sei, dass auf ihn gesehen, ihm nachgewandelt werden müsse. Merkwürdig ist's, dass in diesem Kreise immer das Jahr 1836 als das entscheidende, als der Einbruch des Tausendjährigen Reichs mit seinen Vorkämpfen betrachtet worden ist. Zu dieser Wahnvorstellung haben indess sowohl die Bengel'schen und die Jung-Stilling'schen Berechnungen die Grundlagen hergegeben, als jene Annahme auf einer Reihe von Begegnissen Ebel's und auf ihren zeitlichen Intervallen beruhte. In dieser Voraussetzung der nahe bevorstehenden Veränderung scheint man in jenem Kreise die sonst sorgfältig geübte Vorschrift vernachlässigt und zu einem dreisteren Verfahren bestimmt worden zu sein, wodurch denn allerdings eine Entscheidung, wenn auch nicht über das menschliche Geschlecht, sondern über das Wirken und Thun einiger Menschen, eben jener selbst sich einzuleiten scheint. Kann nun wohl gefragt werden, wie Ebel die ihm Gegenüberstehenden, d. h. Alle, die nicht die Seinen sind, behandle? Als Kinder des Teufels! Hieraus folgt keinesweges, dass er sie sehr anfare, wild anlasse und züchtige; hierzu vielmehr muss man ihm schon näher gerückt sein; er behandelt sie, wenn sie Nichts absichtlich gegen ihn unternehmen, mit grosser Freundlichkeit, Milde, lockend; er sucht den Teufel zu täuschen, damit dieser ja nicht merken möge, was denn eigentlich geschehen soll. Kommt man näher, so werden reine, lautere, evangelische Wahrheiten mit aller Milde vorgetragen und Jedem begegnet, wie es ihm lieb, angenehm und wohlthuend sein kann. Ist man weiter gekommen, so wird auf Reinigung von den Sünden und auf Einsicht in die Tiefen der Erkenntniss gedrungen. Nun werden Sündenbekenntnisse abgenommen, anfänglich nachsichtig und ruhig, dann immer strenger, fordernder; die Blicke trüben sich. Die Begegnung wird gemessener, drohender; kurz, es kommt nun zu alle dem, was bereits oben geschildert worden ist. Wendet Jemand auf diesem Wege den Rücken, so

ist er verloren; es wird über ihn geseufzt, die Achseln gezuckt, er ist zurückgewichen vom Ernst der Heiligung und zurückgekehrt in die Finsterniss der Welt und ihre Verderbniss, er ist untreu und dem Teufel verfallen. Wer sonst aber neutral steht, der wird eben als im Schatten des Todes sitzend betrachtet, jedoch nicht angefeindet; denn es ist ja des Feindes Schuld und der Untreue; denn das wird zuversichtlich angenommen, dass, wenn Niemand aus dieser Schule untreu geworden wäre, das Licht schon weit verbreitet und Viele gerettet, d. h. nahe und ferne Anhänger Ebel's geworden wären. Aber diejenigen auch, die eben nicht angefeindet werden, über die man auch im Herzen keinen Groll trägt, haben deshalb doch auf schlechte, wahrhafte Behandlung keinen Anspruch; sie können ja die Wahrheit nicht ertragen und werden vom Vater der Lüge, der die Wahrheit nicht will, beherrscht; sie werden, in sofern man mit ihnen in Berührung kommt, mit, "Weisheit" behandelt, d. h. man giebt ihnen, was ihnen zukommt, ihnen deutlich ist. Dies aber ist alles Andere eher als die Wahrheit; mit anderen Worten, man behandelt sie nach dem Princip: "seid klug wie die Schlangen," was eben die Anwendung der List, Unwahrheit u. s. w. in sich enthält. Wer ihnen aber entgegen tritt, entgegen zu treten scheint, sei es, wer es wolle oder worin er wolle, gegen den ist nicht mehr wie gegen einen Bewusstlosen, im Dienste des Feindes Stehenden zu verfahren, sondern wie gegen einen mit seinem Willen dem Feinde Ergebenen; an dem kann nichts Gutes mehr gefunden werden, so wenig als am Feinde selbst; welches Arge man von ihm aussage, er hat es verdient, und es war schon a priori, wenn es auch auf keiner Thatsache beruht, mit keiner bewiesen werden kann; diese kann vorausgesetzt und schlechthin behauptet werden; denn er ist ein Feind Gottes schlechthin, und ihn, soweit es geht, zu vertilgen, ist gerecht. Seine Ehre schonen? Ehre eines Feindes Gottes? Ehre eines Teufels? Und nicht blos er selbst kann nach solchen Grundsätzen behandelt werden, sondern auch in Beziehung auf ihn ist alles zum Zweck seiner Vernichtung Dienende gestattet in der Behandlung Anderer.

Ich schweige ganz von der empörenden Weise, wie von Ebel und den Seinen gegen mich, den Grafen von Finkenstein und Prof. Olshausen verfahren worden ist, welche Alle doch nichts Feindliches gegen ihn unternommen hatten, sondern sich nur, weil sie Grund genug dazu in sich gefunden zu haben gewiss geworden waren, von ihm getrennt hatten. Man griff ihre Personen, ihre sittliche und

bürgerliche Ehre, ja, so weit es gelingen wollte, selbst ihre äussere Existenz schonungslos, listig und mit den Waffen der Lüge an. Hievon aber, wie gesagt, ganz zu schweigen, so bietet die dermalige Verfahrungsweise Ebel's und der Seinen, da nun einmal eine Untersuchung eingeleitet und, wie es scheint, unausweichbar und, wie sich dann bei uns von selbst versteht, mit strenger Gerechtigkeit hindurch geführt werden soll, die klare und volle Anschauung sowohl von dem Grundsätzlichen als von dem Praktischen dieser Leute dar, wo sie es mit Gegnern zu thun zu haben glauben. Zuvörderst nämlich hätte es ihnen doch nicht entgehen sollen, was Jedem offen vorliegt, dass nämlich Niemand gegen sie als Ankläger aufgetreten sei, Niemand Feindschaft gegen sie hege, Niemand Verfolgung gegen sie übe. Diestel, den Grafen von Finkenstein (ich habe diesen Mann seit mehr als 10 Jahren nur einmal zufällig und wenig gesprochen, stehe eben so lange in keinem Briefwechsel mit ihm, achte ihn aber wie seine Gemahlin sehr hoch) mit den gröbsten und schmähendsten Briefen verfolgend, wird endlich durch den Rechtskonsulenten des Grafen zur Zurücknahme der Beleidigungen aufgefordert, wenn er sich keinem Injurien-Process aussetzen wolle; er versagt dieses, und die Klage mit den dazu nöthigen Belegen wird der juristischen zuständigen Landesbehörde übergeben. Diese findet in den Belegen Dinge, die in bedenklicher Beziehung zur Kirchen-Disciplin stehn, und hält es für ihre Pflicht, hiervon dem Consistorio Anzeige zu machen; dieses findet diese Momente noch bedenklicher, untersucht dieselben, soweit es ihm zustand, und jedenfalls mit aller der Zartheit und Berücksichtigung, die nur eine geistliche Behörde dem geistlichen Gegenstande zuzuwenden vermag; das Consistorium berichtet darüber der vorgesetzten höchsten Behörde, und die Untersuchung wird nun von Staatswegen angeordnet. Es giebt hier also gar keinen Ankläger. Doch nimmt zuvörderst Graf von Kanitz keinen Anstand, in einem öffentlichen Blatte, der allgemeinen Kirchenzeitung, den sittlichen Ruf des Grafen von Finkenstein, seines Schwagers, und der Gräfin von Finkenstein, seiner Nichte und zugleich Schwägerin, als in der ganzen Provinz übel bekannt darzustellen, dabei auch allerlei andere, wenn auch etwas verdeckter ausgesprochene Anschwäzungen anderer Personen zu insinuiren. Zugleich erhebt sich freiwillig eine grosse Zahl der achtungswerthesten, zum Theil ihrer äusseren Stellung nach ausgezeichnetsten Männer der Provinz, öffentlich bezeugend, dass Graf von Finkenstein

und seine Gemahlin nur als edle, sittlich hoch gestellte Personen bekannt seien. Es wird eine Injurienklage gegen Graf von Kanitz der zuständigen Landesbehörde übergeben—er aber, ein loyaler Unterthan, ein Staatsdiener (Tribunalsrath) und christlicher Mann, würdigt seine Obrigkeit keiner Verantwortung, er stellt sich ihr gar nicht, weil sie Diestel gegen Graf von Finkenstein verurtheilt hatte. So weit lautet dasjenige, was öffentlich bekannt geworden ist. Aber weiter. Die höchsten Orts angeordnete Untersuchung durch den Kriminalsenat beginnt, Ebel und die Seinigen leugnen Alles und bis auf das Geringste herab; gegen alle Zeugen wird protestirt; sie sind Lügner, Verleumder, Sündenschlemmer, ja zum Meineide bereit, jeder Sünde fähig, schuldig; es giebt kein Verhältniss, das nicht verletzt und beschimpft wird. Die vom Richter nöthig erachteten Confrontationen verwandeln sich von Seiten Ebel's und der Seinigen in die ehrenrührendsten und jedes sittigen Anstandes ermangelnden Zänkereien; von sich selbst aber sagen sie mündlich und schriftlich mit einer Naivetät, welche die epische weit hinter sich lässt, das Edelste und Höchste aus: an ihnen ist kein anderer Fehler als höchstens ein Uebermaass von Tugend, das die argen Menschen nicht ertragen können und sich deshalb empören, auflehnen, und weil nicht Uebles in Wahrheit vorzubringen sei, zur Lüge und Verleumdung greifen. Diese so bezeichneten Personen sind aber keine aus der Hefe des Volks, keine ihren Mitbürgern unbekannte Menschen, es sind ältere Leute, Geistliche, Gelehrte, Staatsdiener u. s. w., fast Alle, oder wohl gar Alle Hausväter, und es giebt keinen unter ihnen, der nicht in grösserem oder geringerem Maasse sich öffentlich Vertrauen erworben und darin bewährt hatte. Alle aber wurden schlechthin der Lüge, der Verleumdung auf's Entscheidendste bezüchtigt; von Keinem aber auch nur angenommen, er könne vielleicht in einem Irrthume begriffen und wenigstens subjectiv wahr sein. Nein, sie sind Alle Verleumder mit Bewusstsein und bösem Willen! Ach, wie leicht wäre es doch eben diesen so hart angelassenen Zeugen, sich das Lob der Wahrheit, ja, einen ganzen Strahlenkranz höchster Lobeserhebungen als Menschen und Christen zu erwerben, wenn es ihnen nur möglich gewesen wäre wirklich zu lügen! wenn sie nur auch die Obrigkeit als vom bösen Feinde besessen betrachtet und es angemessener gefunden hätten, sie zu belügen! wenn auch sie nur gemeint hätten, es sei Gottesdienst und Wahrheitstreue, die Mittel durch den Zweck zu heiligen und zu lügen, anstatt Wahrheit zu sagen! wenn sie nur sich

hätten überreden können, ein solches Verfahren sei nicht lästerlich und im tiefsten Grunde gottesleugnerisch! wenn auch sie nur Götzen-mit Gottesdienst hätten verwechseln können!

Freilich, von Seiten Ebel's und der Seinen ist Nichts in dieser Art unterlassen, Nichts für zu schwer gefunden worden, ja, was man nicht für möglich unter gewissen Umständen halten möchte, es ist dennoch geschehen. Menschen zu belügen—leider, dies geschieht nicht selten; die Obrigkeit hintergehen—auch dies ist leider nichts Unerhörtes; wer aber auch nur an eine göttliche Weltregierung glaubt, und wer mit der Geschichte der Menschen und Völker nur irgend wie auf eine wirklich innerliche Weise bekannt geworden ist, dem ist die hohe und göttliche Bedeutung der Oberhäupter, Herrscher und Könige der Völker wenigstens so weit im Gefühle aufgegangen, dass er sich ihnen gegenüber, namentlich, wo es sich um wichtige menschliche und göttliche Angelegenheiten handelt, unmittelbar zur Wahrhaftigkeit genöthigt fühlt. Noch ganz anders ist, wenn Sinn und Inhalt reinen Christenthums nicht fehlt. Dieses, Idololatrie und Unvernunft jeder Art aufhebend, führt unmittelbar dahin, in der göttlichen Regierung der Welt überall einen heiligen Willen und eine göttliche, auch der menschlichen Vernunft willig sich entfaltende Ordnung zu erblicken.

Dieses Christenthum lehrt, innerlichst begreifen, dass bei aller Gleichheit der Menschen vor Gott die Abstufungen in der Erscheinung und Darstellung der menschlichen, für göttliche Zwecke existirenden Gesellschaft eine hohe und unantastbare Bedeutung haben, und dass, wer sich in dieser göttlichen Weltordnung einem Andern untergeordnet sieht, dies als seine göttliche, also auch selige Bestimmung anerkennen müsse, und seine Unterordnung ist in der That, wo er auch stehe, immer nur eine Unterordnung gegen Gott; dieses also in sich Seligkeit und Freiheit, jenes Unseligkeit und Knechtschaft. Wer seinem Könige daher sich tief, gern und mit allem Bewusstsein unterordnet, dem begegnet Nichts von Knechtsgefühl, sondern er weiss es, dass dieses ein Akt seiner Freiheit ist, durch welche er vor Gott dem Könige gleich wird. Und was die höhere Menschenwürde auch in der untergeordneten Stellung unverletzt und rein erhält, ist ja eben das Recht nicht nur, sondern auch die Verpflichtung gegen Jeden, am Allermeisten aber gegen das Höchste und den Höchsten. Und so ist es auch in diesem Sinne bestätigend, dass die Wahrheit das allein frei Machende sei. Wäre es nun wohl möglich, dass man von diesem Standpunkte aus unwahr

und hintergehend und absichtlich täuschend verfahren könnte gegen seine Obere, gegen seinen König selbst? und ist dieser Standpunkt nicht der vernünftig christliche? Ich spreche hier noch gar nicht von der Grösse des bürgerlichen Vergehens, wenn man den König selbst zu täuschen sucht, und ebenso wenig andererseits von dem eben so thörichten als falschen Vorgeben dieser Sectengenossen, dass sie vorzüglich, ja wohl einzig dem Throne wie dem treu gesinnt? und ergeben wären; denn leider sprechen so thörichte und vermessene Behauptungen auch Personen aus anderen, sonst in aller Weise wahrhaft christlich und edel gesinnten Kreisen aus. Aber was aus dem Kreise Ebel's eben in dieser Hinsicht bei Gelegenheit der eingeleiteten Untersuchung nach sehr glaubhaften Nachrichten geschehen sein soll, das verdient als charakteristisch hervorgehoben zu werden; nicht als Anklage, aber als ein für die psychologische Auffassung wichtiges Moment. Es giebt nicht nur in unserm Vaterlande, sondern in ganz Deutschland, im ganzen Europa keinen gebildeten Menschen, der es nicht wüsste, dass eben unser König ein wahrhaft frommer sei, dem Gerechtigkeit und Wahrheit das Theuerste und, was diesem entgegen, ein Gräuel ist. Nun an diesen, an unsern allverehrten König wendet man sich, seine Gnade, seinen Schutz anrufend für einen frommen, von Lügern und Verläumdern hart verfolgten treuen Hirten einer christlichen Gemeinde. Wer wusste nicht, dass ein solcher Anruf das fromme Herz unsres erhabenen Königs erregen könnte? Wie aber wagt man es da von Verläumdung, von Lüge und von Verfolgung zu reden, gegen den König selbst zu reden, wo Nichts vorgebracht ist, als was den Gewissenhaftesten der wohl erwogene und mildeste Ausdruck des Thatsächlichen ist? oder war der Bittsteller selbst in einer Täuschung begriffen? Dann hatte er wenigstens leichtsinnig und unberufen gehandelt. Aber davon ist hier keine Rede; der Graf von Kanitz hat es gethan, er, der allerdings von Allem auf's Genaueste unterrichtet ist—aber eben deshalb auch haarscharf und vollkommen bestimmt weiss, wie schonend und auf alle Weise gemässigt gegen Ebel und die Seinen verfahren worden ist von denen, die er nun als Lügner anklagt, und von seinem und auch unserm Könige. Er weiss es, dass Alles, was geschehen, was ausgesagt worden ist, abgesehen von der vollkommensten Wahrheit desselben, von der Obrigkeit ausgesagt ist, die nicht von Diesem oder Jenem zur Untersuchung durch eine angebrachte Klage veranlasst, sondern von der höchsten Stelle dazu

angewiesen worden ist, vor der aber zu erscheinen und auf ihre Fragen zu antworten nach der Wahrheit, ja gar keine Wahl gelassen, sondern schlechthin Pflicht ist. Und was gab es denn schon zu schreien und die allerhöchste Gnade anzurufen, wo die Untersuchung noch schwebt und nach aller Vorschrift unsrer Gesetze geführt ist? Oder fürchtet er die Justiz? die Preussische Justiz? er, ein Preussischer Tribunalsrath? Möchte er lieber eine türkische gehandhabt haben? Nun wahrlich, dann hätte er sich nicht an den König von Preussen wenden sollen. Will ich aber hiermit den Grafen von Kanitz als einen absichtlichen Verbrecher geschildert haben, weil er in der That Etwas, das eben Geschilderte, begangen, das kann anders als ein Verbrechen, und kein geringes, genannt werden kann? Das sei ferne! Beweisen aber kann es, wie gestattet, wie schlechthin gestattet in der Lehre und in den Grundsätzen es sei, ohne Unterschied Jeden mit Lügen behandeln zu dürfen, wenn er nicht die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit hat, und wenn es dem Zwecke und dem Nutzen der Secte dienen kann. Ferner: es wird glaubhaft berichtet, dass die Katechumenen Ebel's, einige ihm nahe stehende Frauen, sodann aber auch mehrere Andere aufgefordert, ja recht eigentlich gepresst, von Mitgliedern der Secte (diese zogen herum, um Unterschriften auf eine sehr andrängende, bedrängende Weise zu sammeln) sich mit Bittschriften an Seine Majestät den König gewendet haben sollen, in denen die völlige Unschuld und Reinheit Ebel's und der Seinen bethenert und alles gegen ihn Vorgebrachte als Lüge und Verleumdung bezeichnet worden ist. Nun ist Nichts gewisser, als dass weder in jenem Kreise, noch von ihm ausgehend durch Andere Etwas geschehen darf, am Wenigsten etwas Bedeutendes, ohne die ausdrückliche Zustimmung und das bestimmte Geheiss Ebel's, theils wegen des unbedingten Gehorsams, den man ihm schuldig zu sein glaubt, theils der Ueberzeugung wegen, dass Nichts gelingen könne, das nicht durch seine Billigung gewissermassen die Verheissung erhalten hat. (Den wirklichen Charakter des Gehorsams in diesem Kreise zu erkennen, kann auch dieser Zug dienen.) Dass Schritte solcher Art wahrscheinlich überall, bei uns ganz vergebliche sind, versteht sich von selbst. Nicht aber von den Erfolgen, sondern von den Motiven, Principien und Methoden des Verfahrens dieser Secte ist hier die Rede. Und in dieser Beziehung muss es zu fragen gestattet sein: hat es in dieser Beziehung viel, oder auch nur wenig Aehnlichkeit mit dem eines Ehrenmannes, wenn etwa

eine Untersuchung über einen auf seine Ehre Bezug habenden Gegenstand eingeleitet ist, oder wohl gar eines Christen, der über seinen Glauben, über seine Ueberzeugungen, über sein Leben selbst Rechenschaft geben soll? ist es nicht vielmehr gewiss, dass jeder Ehrenmann, und um so mehr jeder fromme Christ (der doch wohl ein Ehrenmann überdies ist) Nichts mehr wünschen, Nichts mehr befördern werde, als dass die Untersuchung möglichst genau, strenge, und bis in's Einzelne eindringend ausfalle, damit er und Wahrheit rein und unbefleckt hervorgehen mögen? Weder ausserordentliche Hilfe, noch Schutz der Hohen oder Höchsten werden sie nachsuchen, noch weniger aber die Untersuchung zu unterdrücken, noch zu ersticken suchen. Und soll ich wohl fragen, ob sie zu tobenden Schimpfreden durch Ehrenkränkung Anderer ihre Zuflucht nehmen werden?

Ich glaube, es seien nun die bisherigen Ertäuerungen so weit fortgeführt und enthalten hinreichenden Stoff, um zur Ableitung einiger wichtiger übersichtlicher Resultate dienen zu können.

1. Nicht dem mindesten Zweifel scheint es unterworfen zu sein, dass eine solche Gemeinschaft, wie die in hier in Rede stehende eine religiöse Secte genannt werden müsse.

2. Im höchsten Grade aber zweifelhaft ist's, ob ihr auch die Benennung einer christlichen Secte beigelegt werden könne; denn was haben deren Grundlehren des Christenthums ausser der Zufälligkeit, gleicher Worte sich hier und da zu bedienen, denen jedoch die aneinandergehendste, ja entgegengesetzte Bedeutung zukommt.

3. Es ist zwar von Ebel verschiedentlich behauptet worden, dass zwischen seiner so genannten philosophischen Lehre und seiner christlichen weiter keine Verbindung sei, jene sei etwas auf speculativem Wege gewonnenes, diese eine christliche, im Glauben befestigte. Es ist aber unbegreiflich, wie man glauben könne, hiermit nachdenkende Menschen täuschen zu können; denn:

a. Der Weg, auf welchem man eine Ueberzeugung gewonnen, eine Wahrheit gefunden hat, ist in Beziehung auf Ueberzeugung und Wahrheit selbst ganz gleichgiltig. Diese bleiben stehen und können, wenn sie in sich selbst nicht aufgehoben werden, nicht weggeschoben werden.

Wie, wenn Jemand etwa auf speculativem Wege die Ueberzeugung der Nichtexistenz Gottes gewonnen hätte, könnte er dabei Christ, ja christlicher Lehrer bleiben und, darüber zur Re-

chenschaft gezogen, antworten: philosophirend leugne ich Gott, aber auf der Kanzel und auf dem Altare bekenne ich ihn. Man kann nicht entgegnen, Atheismus sei Etwas, zu dem man nur durch den höchsten Trotz oder die höchste Unkunde aller Vernunft- und Naturgesetze gelangen könne, eigentlich etwas Unmögliches, der Vergleich mit einem solchen aber unstatthaft. Allerdings musste jeder Atheismus von der genannten Beschaffenheit sein, d. h. entweder in der Anwendung oder auf den Trümmern aller Vernunft- und Naturgesetze aufgeführt worden sein; hat aber die Schönherr-Ebel'sche Lehre einem besseren, oder irgend einen Zusammenhang mit Vernunft und Natur, von der heiligen Schrift ganz und gar abgesehen?

b. Ebel hat gar keinen Anstand genommen, auch zu sagen, seine sogenannte philosophische Lehre habe er nur problematisch hingestellt. Nennt man aber wohl ein Problem Erkenntniss der Wahrheit? Ja, diese Vertheidigungsrede Ebel's, abgesehen von ihrer vollkommenen wissenschaftlichen Unwahrheit, ist noch viel schlimmer und ihn härter anklagend, ja, noch mehr überführend, als das Erste. Denn man bedenke, wie unendlich schwach, ja wie fast ohne eine christliche Ueberzeugung sein Glaube an die Worte und Lehren des Evangeliums sein müsse, wenn sie sich nicht einmal als hinreichend kräftig in ihm haben erweisen können, um Etwas, das weder mit den Gesetzen der Vernunft noch der Natur wohl vereinbar ist, das er überdies selbst nicht einmal mit der subjectiven Ueberzeugung der Wahrheit angenommen hat, sondern nur für etwas Problematisches hält, völlig aus dem Wege räumen zu können.

c. Ebel hat aber in der That diese Erkenntniss nicht nur für wahr, für objectiv wahr gehalten, sondern auch für den wahren und einzigen Schlüssel zur Einsicht in die Bibel, zu demjenigen, was er lebendiges Christenthum genannt, und als dessen Ansatz er die kirchliche Rechtgläubigkeit als nichtig und todt, die zu nichts führen kann als höchstens zur Täuschung über sich selbst und endlich zum Tode und Verderben zu nennen pflegte. In diesem Sinne wurden die orthodoxen und frömmsten Geistlichen unserer Stadt, z. B. der verstorbene Erzbischof Dr. Borowski, die beiden Prediger der Altrossgärtschen Kirche, Kahle und Weiss, der Pfarrer Weiss, Hahn, als er bei uns war, als todtte Christen, deren Wirksamkeit höchst verderblich sei, mit grossem Eifer und nicht geringem Zornmthe geschildert. In diesem Sinne wurde auch mit der grössten Verwerfung von dem Berlinischen Christenthum ge-

sprochen; in eben diesem Sinne sprach Ebel immer viel günstiger von den sogenannten Rationalisten; denn, unzufrieden zwar mit ihren Resultaten, lobte er doch an ihnen, dass sie sich wenigstens doch nach anderen Beweismitteln umsahen, als eben die kirchliche Orthodoxie überliefert; von ihnen daher meinte und hoffte er, sie würden auch zur Erkenntniss der Wahrheit, d. h. zu seiner zu bewegen sein, wenn man sie zuvor nur irgend wie zur persönlichen Unterwerfung bringen könnte.

d. In Wahrheit hat auch Ebel so wenig sein philosophisches Credo (die mit dem Namen der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit belegte Lehre) von seinem kirchlichen (denn evangelisch kann es nicht genannt werden) getrennt, dass Jeder, der nur mit jenem einigermaßen bekannt war, in der Predigt theils Andeutungen, theils aber auch bestimmte Ausführungen desselben, wenn auch in so verdeckter und in Bibelworte gehüllter Weise, dass es den mit jener Lehre Unbekannten verborgen bleibt, finden konnte und musste. Ja, es verhält sich auch so mit den meisten, wenn nicht mit allen von Ebel durch den Druck bekannt gemachten Predigten.

4. Das Haupt dieser Secte ist Ebel, jedoch nicht so wie auch andere Secten von jeher Häupter und Vorsteher gehabt haben; denn er hat in seinem Kreise nicht bloß wie die Häupter anderer Secten eine höhere menschliche Stellung, sondern göttliche Bedeutung, wie das aus der Lehre selbst gefolgert, hierdurch aber wiederum die Lehre begründet, d. h. ohne Grund festgehalten, zunächst aber unbedingter Gehorsam für und absolute Unterwerfung Aller unter ihn herbeigeführt und mit der äussersten Strenge gefordert und beobachtet worden ist. Das ist sattemal eben dargethan.

5. Stand aber einmal Ebel da als vollkommener Mensch, als der Heilige und Reine (nicht bloß dieses Kreises, sondern auch des Universums) unserer Zeit, hat er nicht bloß die Wahrheit, sondern war er sie auch, war er nicht bloß der Reine, sondern war eben seine Wirkung auf Andere (d. h. auf das zweite Urwesen, also besonders auf die Frauen) heiligend und reinigend, so ergab sich nun von selbst

a. Ob es wahr sei, was er sagte, lehrte, that, danach konnte ja gar nicht gefragt werden; es war wahr, weil er es gesagt, gelehrt, gethan hatte.

b. Sein Umgang mit den Frauen wäre nach sonstigen Beurtheilungen unzüchtig zu nennen gewesen, ja er selbst wusste für Andere, selbst wenn sie nur im Entferntesten auf diese Weise verfahren, keine andere Benennung; weil er aber der Reine war, so

konnte auch sein Thun nicht unrein sein, und weil er der Heilige war, nicht unheilig sein. Er beruft sich daher auch fort und fort auf seine Reinheit, ja auf seine natürliche Keuschheit (er, der sonst immer behauptet und lehrt, von Natur sei an uns, d. h. an Allem ausser ihm Alles böse und verderbt.)

c. Als vollkommner Mensch war seine Natur, weise zu sein. Weisheit aber besteht darin, Jeden so behandeln zu können, wie er es eben braucht und ihm frommt; es war also ein Vorzug, Jedem ein Anderer zu sein, nicht, wie Paulus, Allen Alles. In der That wechselte er die Farbe chamäleonisch, und seine Erscheinung war mehr als die eines Proteus. Dass die Leute, dies bemerkend, ihn stets für einen Falschen und Heuchler hielten, das erklärte er in heiteren Stunden als eine schwere Finsterniss, die das Laud noch deckt, wodurch aber die Weisheit in der Nothwendigkeit des Wechsels ihrer Erscheinung nicht erkannt werde; in Stunden des Verdrosses aber wurde dies dadurch erklärt, dass irgend Jemand im Kreise gesündigt hat, ein verborgener Bann da sein müsse, der eine solche Verwirrung anrichte. Und deren gab es leider viele.

d. Der Heilige und Reine sollte doch nothwendig dem Bösen in der Welt (dem Fürsten der Welt, dem Teufel) entgegen wirken; dieser aber ist ein Lügner, diesem muss nun das Reich herbeizuführen, diejenige Gegenwehr entgegengesetzt werden, durch welche er die Wahrheit mit Bewusstsein und aus freiem Willen zurückgewiesen hatte; dies aber ist nur möglich durch die List, und zwar eben durch die List der Wahrheit. Nun beherrscht ja aber der Teufel Alle, die nicht in der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit stehn, es müssen also Alle mit List behandelt werden, d. h. überlistet, d. h. der Teufel in ihnen bekämpft werden.

Das grosse Maass der hierzu gebrauchten Lügen wurde dem Dienste der Wahrheit zu Gute geschrieben, ohne das Gewissen irgend wie zu beschweren. Dieselbe Weisheit wurde aber nicht nur gegen die Draussenstehenden angewendet, sondern auch gegen die Mitglieder des Kreises selbst; denn nur Wenige von ihnen waren ja völlig hindurch gedrungen, die Meisten waren ja auch angezogen und erweckt, doch nicht durchweg erleuchtet und zu vollkommener Mannesstärke herangereift; auch sie waren ja noch den Anfechtungen des Feindes ausgesetzt, noch vielfach dunkel und zur Finsterniss geneigt, auch sie also mussten mit List behandelt werden. Zur gleichen Weisheit aber nun gehört es auch, dass jeder zum Kreise Gehörige, welche Stufe er auch inne habe

in die Meinung gesetzt und in ihr erhalten werde, ihm sei Alles mitgetheilt, er wisse Alles, vor ihm habe man kein Geheimniss. Wird er dennoch später weiter geführt, so wird ihm das frühere Vorenthalten als eine Handlung liebender Weisheit begreiflich gemacht, nun aber, das erfährt er wieder, wisse er Alles. Wird man unter solchen Behandlungen von einem unheimlichen Gefühle ergriffen, und hat man noch nicht Energie zur entscheidenden Trennung gewonnen, so bleibt Nichts übrig, als dieses Unheimliche in sich selbst heimlich zu verschliessen, da sonst die Begegnung düster und rauh wird. Zu jener Energie aber gelangt man nur nach vielen inneren Schmerzen und Kämpfen; denn wie ist doch dafür gesorgt worden, dass man sich zuvor gewissermassen gefangen gegeben, und sich selbst in Fesseln geschlagen habe? Zur Zeit, als ich diesem Kreise noch angehörte, d. i. vor nun fast 11 Jahren, gab es wohl nur 4 Mitglieder desselben, die zur vollkommenen Mannesstärke, der Alles enthüllt werden, die Alles tragen konnte, gelangt waren; diese bestanden aus 3 Frauen: Gräfinnen v. d. Gröben, v. Kanitz (diese letztere verstorben), Fräulein Emilie v. Schrötter; das vierte Mitglied war freilich keine Frau, gewiss aber auch kein Mann; denn Graf v. Kanitz war dieses 4te Mitglied, und ihm tritt man gewiss nicht zu nahe, wenn man ihm bei williger Einräumung mancher Eigenschaften, ja selbst Vorzüge alles Männliche abspricht.

Ich fahre nun in der Darstellung selbst fort. Eine solche in Geheimniss sich hüllende Verbindung konnte nicht bestehen, ohne bemerkt, ohne beobachtet und beurtheilt zu werden. Dass die Urtheile nicht gleich, über Manche ungerecht waren, ist natürlich, und darüber zu rechten wäre unrecht. Worin aber Alle übereinkommen, das war ein Gefühl des Misstrauens und des Missachtens. Ja, da Viele unbefangen genug urtheilten, so kam es bald dahin, dass sich die Annahme sehr verbreitete: Ebel ziehe unter dem Scheine der Heiligkeit junge und hübsche Damen an sich, verhandle mit ihnen in Worten Gottseliges, in der That Fleischliches und grübst Sinnliches; ältere reiche Frauen mussten ihm die Töchter zur Einweihung in die tiefere Frömmigkeit zuführen, dabei es aber auch nicht an äusseren Opfern, Geschenken, an Geld und Sachen fehlen lassen, reiche Grafen und andere Wohlhabende aber ebenfalls angenehme Opfer darbringen, Alle, die mit Ebel in Verbindung standen, waren im Publicum mit dem Namen Mucker (Scheinheilige) bezeichnet; sie hatten, in welchen Verhältnissen sie auch stehen mochten, ungemeine Schwierigkeiten zu überwinden; man

blieb gern ausser allen näheren Verhältnissen mit ihnen. Viele legten sich auch nicht einmal den Zwang auf, ihr Misstrauen und Missachten zu verbergen. Oft wurde in dem Kreise darüber gesprochen und in besseren Stimmungen von Ebel als Ermunterung gedeutet: es wäre die Schmach Christi, die man zu tragen hätte, die man willig und freudig auf sich nehmen müsse; in trüben Stimmungen dagegen (und diese wurden immer häufiger und am Meisten über diejenigen ausgegossen, die dem Kreise längere Zeit angehörten und den Erwartungen noch nicht entsprachen) wären sie, hiess es, hindurch gedungen, so würde auch Alles herrlich stehen. Was sie aber hätten thun und leisten sollen, das blieb verborgen. Es wurde geseufzt, Achsel gezuckt, gemurrt, etc.; Ebel erklärte voll Zorn, er müsse Alles leiden, ihm geschehe alles Wehe, ihm dem Unschuldigen; das Reich Gottes würde aufgehalten, nicht durch die draussen stehenden Armen, die sich ja nicht helfen könnten, da sie nicht die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit hätten, sondern durch die Trügheit und Lässigkeit der Mitglieder des Kreises; dem Reiche Gottes müsse Gewalt geschehen. Solcher und ähnlicher heftiger Reden wurden viele gehalten; die Damen blickten mit Thränen auf Ebel, den unschuldig Leidenden, Heiligen und Reinen. Wer nach Sinn verlangte, ging leer aus, musste aber sehr still sein. Nun jedenfalls nahm das Publicum immer mehr in der Ueberzeugung zu, dass Ebel nicht derjenige sei, der er scheine, dass Unheilvolles im Hintergrunde liege; da man nun überdies wusste, dass die Anhänger Ebel's, namentlich der weibliche Theil emsig mit Werbungen sich beschäftigte, so waren Haus- und Familienväter sehr wachsam; denn es wurde für ein Unglück geachtet, wenn Jemand in diesen Kreis hereingezogen wurde.

Wie sehr sich das frühe schon am hiesigen Orte so verhalten habe, das bezeugen zwei Druckschriften des Herrn Consistorialrath Kühler; er liess nämlich in den Jahren 1822, 23, wenn ich nicht irre, 2 Hefte einer Schrift drucken, der er den Titel: Philagathos gegeben. In geistreicher, gewandter und lebendiger Darstellung, wie sie diesem ausgezeichneten Manne eigenthümlich ist, werden die inneren Verhältnisse dieser Verbindung, namentlich Ebel in seiner Tendenz nicht nur, sondern auch seinem Thun nach genau, ja fast portraithaft gezeichnet, Schein und Sein dieser Secte wird philosophisch und physiologisch scharf aufgefasst und durchgeführt; der Schluss stellt eine Scene dar, die Schrecken und Entsetzen erregt und doch kein Fictum ist. Das geringste Ver-

dienst dieser Schrift ist die poetische Erfindung, sie enthält vielmehr gar Nichts in Beziehung auf Sachen und Personen, was nicht damals die ganz allgemeine Annahme in hiesiger Stadt gewesen wäre, deshalb gab es auch beim Erscheinen dieser Schrift kein Rathen und kein Zweifeln, wer etwa mit diesem oder jenem Namen, ja mit dieser oder jener Andeutung gemeint sein sollte, sondern Alles vielmehr war sofort Allen klar, weil Allen zuvor Alles bekannt war, wenigstens in der Voraussetzung als moralische Ueberzeugung, wenn auch Niemand die juridische zu geben vermögend war, noch weniger aber Jemand so leicht es vermocht hätte wie der genannte Verfasser des Philagathos aus der vor den Augen des Geistes schwebenden Wirklichkeit das Wesentlichste herauszugreifen und mit geschickter, sichrer Hand es zur festen Betrachtung hinstellen. Ja, es ist höchst merkwürdig und für den ersten Augenblick kaum glaublich, doch aber streng wahr und aus der eben gegebenen Schilderung, wie die Mitglieder des Kreises behandelt worden sind, begreiflich, dass in jener Schrift Manches deutlich und bestimmt als innerer Vorgang des Kreises, als Thatsache angegeben worden ist, was unter den Mitgliedern selbst Vielen, ja selbst schon Vorgerückteren, z. B. Olshausen und mir unbekannt gewesen ist, wenigstens damals; denn später habe ich es allerdings erfahren.

Alles bis hierher Bemerkte bezieht sich lediglich auf Ebel und seine Erklärung, indessen ist hiemit auch in der That Alles für die Erklärung der in Rede stehenden Sache nicht bloß berührt worden, sondern wirklich abgethan; denn das erschütternde Wort Ludwig's XIV. "*l'état c'est moi*" konnte Ebel in Beziehung auf den von ihm gebildeten Kreis mit viel grösserem Rechte sprechen. Nie, und das ist die strengste Wahrheit, hat ein Despot willkürlicher geherrscht, nie ein Jesuitengeneral strengeren Gehorsam gefordert und erhalten, nie ein Pabst so schnell und viel kanonisirt und anathematisirt als Ebel.

Doch ist von einigen anderen Personen noch Erwähnung zu thun; es wird dies kurz geschehen können, zumal sie schon angeführt sind und Einiges über sie bemerkt. Die Personen aber, deren ich noch zu gedenken habe, sind: die verstorbene Gräfin von Kanitz (geb. von Derschau), die Gräfin von der Gröben, Graf von Kanitz, Diestel und ich selbst.

1. Die nachherige Gräfin von Kanitz, geb. von Derschau ist die älteste Freundin Ebel's gewesen. Ihr Vater, den ich persön-

lich nicht gekannt habe, ein preussischer Major, scheint ein Mann der wackersten Art gewesen zu sein, von frommer christlicher Gesinnung, dabei aber dem Mysteriösen (im besten Sinne) etwas zugeneigt. Christlich erzogen, vom verstorbenen Erzbischof von Borowski unterrichtet und eingesegnet, lernte Fräulein von Derschau frühe, jedoch erst (wenn ich nicht irre) nach dem Tode ihres Vaters Ebel als Prediger kennen. Der junge, schöne, feurige Redner machte grossen Eindruck auf sie, und sie suchte seine persönliche Bekanntschaft. Hier wurde sie inne, dass sie vorher das Christenthum gar nicht gekannt habe; in der That erhielt sie bald ein neues. Sie hatte als breiteste Basis ihrer Natur eine starke Sinnlichkeit, zu der sich als geistige Anlage eine sehr regsame, durch keinen gründlichen Unterricht geregelte Phantasie gesellte. In der Mitte ihres Wesens stand eine grosse Herzensfreundlichkeit; sie selbst sagte, sie sei zur Wollust geneigt. Ebel beruhigte sie, indem er ihr begreiflich machte, jene an sich sei nicht Sünde, sie werde es nur, wenn sie vom Feinde gemissbraucht wird, durch die Erkenntniss der Wahrheit werde sie geheiligt und zur edlen Wesenhaftigkeit erhoben. Früher wurde sie mit Schönherr durch Ebel bekannt; sie glaubte, sie sei das zu jenem gehörige Weib, sah jedoch später ihren Irrthum ein. Ganz und gar Ebel ergeben, in ihm das Höchste erblickend und verehrend, wurde sie zu einer vollkommenen zweischeidigen Fanatikerin. Mit ihr zuerst hat Ebel die sogenannten geschlechtlichen Reinigungen geübt, und wie Ebel mir erzählt, wurden diese zuerst von ihr zur Sprache gebracht und eingeleitet. Sie, ein stark sinnliches Weib und lange in geschlechtlicher Erregung durch die sogenannten Reinigungsacte erhalten, musste die Ehefrau eines Mannes wie Kanitz werden, weil es ermittelt wurde, dass sie Beide schlechthin zusammengehören und zwar eben dadurch, dass sie die beiden Zeugen wären, von denen in der Apokalypse gesprochen ist. Mit Freude ging sie das Ehebündniss ein, doch sehr bald sprach sie ihr innigstes Mitleiden über Kanitz aus. Nur wenige Jahre lebte sie verheirathet, und in den letzten Stunden ihres Lebens, in welchen ich bis zu ihrem Verscheiden bei ihr gewesen und sie beobachtet habe, hat sie wohl eine bedeutende Veränderung erfahren. Ebel nämlich hatte mit einem unendlichen Redestrome in sie hineingeredet, ihr Bestellungen nach dem Himmel, besonders an den Herrn Christus (wie er eben dort ist) aufgetragen und sie ihn empfänglich hingebend und aufmerksam, dann wenigstens geduldig angehört; nun aber bat sie

ihn, inne zu halten und ihr das heilige Abendmahl zu reichen, nach welchem sie verlange. Da er aber mit jenen Reden fortfuhr, so wurden ihre Bitten dringender, endlich gebot sie ihm Stillschweigen und die schleunige Reichung des Mahles. Diese Handlung wurde nun kirchlich vollzogen; sie, dadurch sehr beruhigt, sprach kein lautes Wort mehr, noch auch liess sie zu sich reden, sondern blieb im tiefsten, andächtigsten, stillen Gebete noch mehre Stunden, und verschied sanft. Ich habe die moralische und feste Ueberzeugung, dass Gott ihr redliches Herz angesehen und eben in dieser letzten Stunde sie von allem Irrthume geheilt habe. Ruhe und Friede sei mit ihr!

2. Gräfin Ida von der Gröben. Mehres und nicht Unwesentliches ist bereits im Verlaufe dieser Darstellung zur Bezeichnung ihrer ausgezeichneten Persönlichkeit bemerkt worden, einiges gewiss jedoch zu einer vollkommenen Charakteristik nicht Zureichendes muss noch hinzugefügt werden. Schon in ihrer romantisch-phantastischen Zeit, die bis zu ihrer näheren Verbindung mit Ebel reicht, war in ihr eine besondere Charakterstärke zur festesten Ausführung gefasster Vorsätze ausgebildet. Sie, sehr jung verheirathet, von äusserst zartem Körperbau, von Natur eigentlich sehr weichlich (was sich auch nach ihrer so genannten Erweckung und als sie schon vollkommen geheiligt, die neue Natur angezogen hatte, wiederum sehr deutlich zeigte,) fand es für ein ritterliches Weib ungeziemend, über körperliche Leiden zu klagen, oder wohl gar Schmerzenslaute auszustossen. Sie fasste daher den Vorsatz, auch in der Stunde der Geburtsnoth sich keinen Schmerzenston entschlüpfen zu lassen, und so führte sie es auch aus, obwohl, schon als Erstgebärende höchst leidend, sie auch noch eine künstliche Geburt zu überstehen hatte. Nach vielen Jahren, als sie lange schon "im neuen Leben" gestanden hatte, litt sie an einer kleinen Eiteransammlung unter einem Hühnerauge; es musste Etwas operirt werden, aber die ganze Operation war keine andere, als die bei gewöhnlichen Hühneraugen; doch erfasste sie Furcht und Zagen, sie bat und beschwor mich, doch nur ja recht schonend und vorsichtig zu verfahren. Ich führe dies an und füge zugleich etwas Allgemeines hinzu, weil mir hierin etwas Charakteristisches, nicht blos der einzelnen Person, sondern der ganzen Verbindung und ihres innerlichen Zustandes zu liegen scheint. Seit fast 30 Jahren sehe ich täglich Kranke, seit 26 Jahren bin ich Arzt, nie aber habe ich im kranken

Zustande Personen weichlicher und furchtsamer, ja auch nur so weichlich und furchtsam sich benehmen gesehen als eben die Mitglieder dieses Kreises, und zwar sind sie es in dem Maasse mehr, je höher sie im Kreise stehen und sich wirklich demselben innerlich angeschlossen haben. Obenan in dieser Beziehung stand Ebel selbst, dann folgte Gräfin Ida von der Gröben. Sie haben nämlich die Ueberzeugung, dass auch ihr Leib nunmehr eine viel höhere Bedeutung habe, überdies in sich selbst so veredelt und der neuen Natur angemessen sei, dass gar nicht gegen ihn zu kämpfen, seine Gefühle nicht zu unterdrücken und nicht zu überwinden seien, wohl aber mussten sie ihn äusserst sorgfältig bewahren und schützen; dagegen aber treffe sie Etwas, das um dasjenige sich bewegt, was sie die Sache, ihre Sache, Gottes Sache nennen, und erfordere dies eine Uebernahme körperlicher Schmerzen, auch der grössesten, so wurden sie gewiss ruhig und standhaft ertragen. Doch ich will lieber nicht weiter im Plural reden; denn weder von Ebel selbst, noch von Kanitz, noch von Diestel glaube ich es recht, von der Gräfin v. d. Gröben ist es aber gewiss, und eben so hatten sich die verstorbene Gräfin von Kanitz und in gleicher Weise Fraülein Emilie v. Schrötter verhalten. Nun aber fahre ich fort: diese Frau, diese wahrhaft edle Natur hat in Ebel Alles erblickt, Alles gefunden und erhalten, was sie irgend sich hat ansehen können; er ist ihr Geliebter, ihr Mann, ihr Erlöser, ja, wie es in irgend einem anderen Zusammenhange gar nicht möglich wäre, ihr Gott; er ist ihr Inhalt auf Erden und im Himmel, für Zeit und Ewigkeit ihm zu dienen, ist ihr Freiheit; ihm ein Opfer zu bringen, wäre ihr das Herzblut nicht zu theuer; sondern das Liebste, ihm sich hinzugeben, ganz, widerstandlos; in ihm vollkommen sich zu verlieren—was könnte ihr Höheres begegnen, wie könnte sie selbst sich besser und veredelter empfinden und finden, als in ihm! und würde Ebel ihr sagen: "Ida, gehe hin und senke diesem Menschen den Dolch in's Herz"—sie würde ihn nur anblicken, um zu sehen, ob es sein Ernst sei; fände sie dies, so ginge sie hin und thäte es; ist er denn Mensch, dass er irren könnte? Ja, sie thäte mehr, mehr wenigstens als Selbstopfer: würde ihr Ebel sagen: Ida, gehe hin, liebe diesen Menschen und gieb dich ihm als Weib hin, auch dies würde sie, wenn vielleicht auch unter Thränen, aber doch ohne allen Zweifel und in willigstem Gehorsam thun. Dass diese Schilderung vollkommen wahr und sehr mässig ausgedrückt sei, davon bin ich innigst und durch die genaueste

Kenntniss eben dieser Persönlichkeit überzeugt. Zusammenschauern muss freilich jeder Unbefangene darüber, Jeder aber auch, der dabei denkt, was ein menschliches Herz ist, und was eine menschliche Seele, wird bekennen müssen, dass dieses Herz, diese Seele ein Gegenstand würdiger Betrachtung sei und innigster Theilnahme; und Niemand wird leugnen, dass ein hoher Grad angestammten und ausgebildeten inneren Adels dazu gehört, um so weit sich verirren, so tief fallen zu können. Aber wehe dem Verführer! er hat diese edle Seele, dieses treueste Herz Gott entwendet, ihm einen anderen hineingelogen!—Eben diese Hingebung aber, die gewiss eben so wenig gewährt als angenommen werden sollte, ist zu einer schweren Fessel für Ebel selbst geworden. Denn mit der grössten Strenge sieht nun die Gräfin v. d. Gröben nicht nur darauf, dass Niemand aus dem Kreise die tiefste, ja recht eigentlich göttliche Ehrerbietung und unbedingten Gehorsam ihm verweigere, sondern er selbst darf sich keinen Augenblick menschlichen Schwächen überlassen, d. h. nicht der Schwäche, ein blos gewöhnlicher Mensch zu sein; dies wird sogleich als eine schnell zu beseitigende Anfechtung aus der alten Natur gedeutet; unter sehr freundlicher Geberdung nimmt er dann auch eine solche Mahnung an und tritt sogleich in die Stellung als vollkommener Mensch wieder ein. Offenbar aber ist er in dem Wahne, den er selbst ausgestreut (an den er selbst seiner Schlaueit und äusserlichen Tendenz nach niemals fest geglaubt hat,) immer enger und enger eingeschlossen und gebunden. Sie selbst, wie es nun einmal in ihr geworden, vermag nicht anders zu denken, zu sehen und zu handeln; käme ihr eine Stimme vom Himmel mit dem Zurufe: "Ebel hat dich getäuscht, betrogen, er ist ein Mensch, ja ein sehr sündhafter und verschmitzter Mensch," sie würde ihm als einem feindlichen, aus der Hölle kommend nicht glauben; denn sie ist überzeugt, ihren himmlischen Freund und Erlöser, dessen Weib zu sein sie ja die selige Bestimmung hat, gefunden, mit Augen gesehen und inbrünstig umschlungen zu haben, und er ist bei ihr, und sie ist bei ihm! Und nur in dieser festen Ueberzeugung kann sie sich selbst fassen und begreifen; unter jeder anderen Bedingung müsste sie sich ja selbst als eine Prostituirte betrachten und verabscheuen! Freilich würde Ebel selbst seinen innersten Hochmuth nur so weit brechen können, um von dem tiefen Elend, das er um sich angerichtet, gerührt und erweicht zu werden, würde er dann noch etwas tiefer in sich blicken, mit welcher schlangenherzigen

Kälte er es zugelassen, dass sich Ströme der wärmsten Liebe über ihn ergossen, ohne dass er einen Laut der Wahrheit, ein Wort menschlicher Aufrichtigkeit zur Erwiderung gesendet, würde es ihm dann vielleicht zum ersten Male seit langer, langer Zeit bange um's Herz und schlug Angst in seine verhärtete Seele ein: — dann würde er wohl vor Allen zu ihr, zu dieser getäuschten, edlen Frau hineilen, ihr zu Füßen mit dem Bekenntnisse stürzen, dass er ein sehr schwacher, tief verschuldeter, unglücklicher Mensch, dessen drei Kardinal-Laster, Augenlust, Fleischeslust und hoffärtiges Wesen, sein Innerstes zerwühlt, dass er ein hochmüthiger, wollüstiger und verschmitzter Pfaffe sei! Ach, dass er es thäte! sie würde ihm glauben und ihm vergeben, Ruhe aber und Vergabung für sich selbst suchen und finden, wo sie allein nur zu suchen und zu finden sind, bei dem allbarmherzigen Gott; ihr Herz würde stark genug sein, um diesen härtesten Schlag zu ertragen; denn sie ist stark, und es könnte ihr der Trost, beim Suchen des Guten und Wahren in die tiefste Täuschung gestürzt worden zu sein, nicht entgehen. Einstweilen thut jedoch Ebel etwas Anderes: er behauptet sich in seiner Truggestalt, lässt sich von seiner Umgebung und gewiss am Meisten von der beklagenswerthen Gräfin v. d. Gröben die tiefste Adoration gefallen, rühmt seine Keuschheit und Reinheit, und kein menschlich wahres Wort kommt über seine Lippen.

3. Graf von Kanitz. Seine Persönlichkeit zieht zunächst durch Milde, sodann durch seine feine Sitte an, welche ein glückliches Erbtheil vieler Personen aus den höheren Ständen ist. Sein Charakter hat nichts Ostensibles, sein Gemüth nichts Widerstrebendes. Aber man kann ihn lange gekannt, ihm sehr nahe gestanden haben, ohne etwas Positives in ihm gefunden zu haben; man kann bei vollständiger und nicht unangenehmer persönlicher Erscheinung nicht leerer von allem persönlichen Inhalte sein, als er es ist. Man kann nicht einmal sagen, er sei unselbstständig; denn man findet gar kein Selbst, dem er innerlich folgen, oder von dem er sich entfernen könnte. Dabei ohne gründliche Kenntnisse irgend einer Art, also ohne Stützung innerlich, ohne festen Anhalt äusserlich. Seine Jugend fällt in die Zeit, in welcher die Alten selbst sich jugendlich erweckt fühlten, die Jugend aber zur reinsten Flamme der Vaterlandsliebe aufgelodert und von einem allgemeinen religiösen Gefühle ergriffen war. Von diesem damals in ganz Deutschland, vorzüglich aber in unserm Vaterlande wehenden Geiste ist auch er nach dem Masse seiner Empfänglichkeit berührt

worden; er machte den Feldzug mit und kehrte mit einer militärischen Dekoration zurück. Eine solche Persönlichkeit hat nun das natürliche Bedürfniss zur Anlehnung gegen einen Andern, nur weiss sie freilich nicht die rechte zu suchen und zu finden, jedenfalls wird sie selber viel leichter hingenommen von Anderen, die Absichten, gute oder üble, haben und verfolgen. Kanitz glaubt, Ebel gefunden zu haben, in Wahrheit aber hat Ebel Kanitz genommen. Misslicheres, ja Unglücklicheres hätte sich für Kanitz gar nicht ereignen können; denn, an einen so absichtsvollen, versatilen Mann angeschlossen, war jede Möglichkeit für ihn verloren, irgend wann oder irgend wo einen Schwerpunkt in sich selbst zu finden. Und dies auch ist in der That völlig unterblieben. Kanitz vermag Nichts, und thut Nichts, als fort und fort gleichsam die Lection aufsagen, die Ebel ihm aufgegeben, nicht zu lernen, sondern die Worte selbst sind mitgegeben, das darf nur aufgesagt werden, und dies ist seit mehr als 20 Jahren das ausschliessliche Thun des Grafen v. Kanitz. Denn das ist freilich einerlei, ob er sagt und thut, was Ebel oder durch ihn die Gräfin v. d. Gröben oder irgend Jemand, der zu Ebel gehört und doch selbst noch irgend Etwas ist, ihm zu sagen oder zu thun aufgegeben. Es kann daher allerdings sogar possierlich erscheinen, wenn Jemand, der wie Graf von Kanitz so ganz und gar den Eindruck absoluter Schwäche macht, sich starker Ausdrücke bedient; es erklärt sich aber ganz leicht dadurch, dass sie zur Lection gehören. Mit einem Worte, es kann eigentlich vom Grafen von Kanitz gar nicht als von einer bestimmten geistigen Individualität die Rede sein, und eben nur dies ist's, was hier über ihn bemerkt werden musste. Wird einst Ebel entlarvt sein, dann wird Kanitz wie aus einem Traume erwachen und dann ein förmlich harmloser, wohlwollender, gütiger Mensch sein, denn dazu hat er die natürliche Bestimmung und den reinen Zug des Herzens. Bis dahin sagt und thut er, was Ebel ihm befiehlt.

4. Der Prediger Diestel. Weder eine tiefe, noch schwierige, noch verwickelte Natur, ist's dennoch schwer, über diesen Mann zu reden, wenn es darauf ankommt, ihn psychologisch zu charakterisiren. Es wollen sich nämlich hiezu nicht leicht und auch nicht, wenn man sorgfältig sucht, Ausdrücke finden, die bezeichnend wären und doch nicht entweder den Anstand etwas verletzend oder den Verdacht erregend, dass sie ohne Noth zu stark seien. In solcher Verlegenheit ist man immer, wenn man anständig und wahr sprechen

soll von Personen, gegen welche Nichts ungeziemender sein kann, als ungemessener, unmüssiger, oder wohl gar roher Ausdruck. Von Verirrungen, selbst von der tiefsten, ja sogar von offenbaren Schlechtigkeiten kann man, wenn es sein muss, vor den gebildetsten und fein gesinnten Personen ohne Verlegenheit sprechen; denn jene Dinge beziehen sich auf sittliche Zustände, die zu betrachten oft ein sittliches Gebot, niemals aber unwürdig, am Wenigsten widerwärtig sein kann; das Gemeine aber erregt Ekel. Man denke sich einen Mann von einer ungemeinen natürlichen Grobheit und einem heftig polternden Wesen, der eben nur in solchem Anfahren und Anlassen Anderer zum Gefühle eigener Tüchtigkeit zu gelangen vermag; dabei, wie harte und rohe Menschen immer zu sein pflegen, eine knechtische Natur, d. h. in schmutziger Unterwerfung sich wohl gefallend, wenn sie nur ausserhalb dieser selben Zähmung Alles anfahren und angreifen kann, ja wohl zum Theil hiezu von der eignen Herrschaft bestimmt ist. Innerlich verworren, platt sinnlich, alle geistige Thätigkeit nur unter der Form des Streites und diesen selbst nur als rohen Zank begreifend und ühend—denkt man sich einen Solchen, so hat man die allgemeine Grundlage des Herrn Prediger Diestel, die freilich keine zu einem rein menschlichen, noch weniger aber zu einem anziehenden Charakter ist. Es muss aber noch hinzugenommen werden: er hatte früher Jura studirt, dann aber sich zum Studium der Theologie gewendet; während dieses Studiums, noch auf der Universität ist er mit Schönherr in Verbindung getreten und, von diesem als ein Engel aus der Apokalypse erkannt, Heinrich Siegelbrecher genannt worden. Wie wenig tief oder nur mit wissenschaftlichem Ernst er die Theologie studirt, zeigt eben seine frühe Verbindung mit Schönherr, wie wenig er aber auch für sich innerlich hingegeben hat, beweist seine Trennung von Schönherr beim Eintritt in's geistliche Amt. (Landgeistlichen, auch mehreren sehr voluminösen Belehrungsbriefen, der kleinste füllte ein ziemlich starkes Quartheft, die Fräulein von Derschau, spätere Gräfin von Kanitz, ihm geschrieben, antwortete er weder mündlich noch schriftlich; denn sie drang auf ihn mit grossem Ernst, mit entschiedener, freilich phantastischer Schärfe ein, und da zog sich denn seine feige Natur zurück, wie man ja sogar von sonst wilden und reissenden Thieren erzählt, dass sie durch entschlossenen, ernst menschlichen Blick in die Flucht getrieben werden.) So wandelte er denn lange hin, von Wenigen bemerkt, aber, wie er nachher von sich selbst zur grossen-

Beschwerde derer, die es anzuhören hatten, erzählte, in grosser Sorglosigkeit um seinem sittlichen Zustand, in träger Hingebung an seine Sinnlichkeit. Aber freilich war ihm für sein Amt am Angemessensten und seiner Natur am Entsprechendsten, dass er ein heftig polternder Prediger blieb, und hiezu war eine dogmatische Anschliessung an die kirchliche Orthodoxie am Bequemsten, so wie ihm wohl früher in der Verbindung mit Schönherr nicht dessen Lehre an sich, sondern das damit verbundene Schimpfen, Verachten und Wegwerfen alles Anderen das anzügliche Wesen zu sein scheint. Im Jahre 1821 (wenn ich nicht irre, auch schon früher) tritt er wiederum in eine neue Verbindung mit Ebel, mit dem er jedoch, äusserlich einmal von diesem sehr verachtet, immer in einigem Zusammenhange geblieben war. Das Nächste, was er nun that, um seine Reue darzuthun, war ein Umherrennen zu den Mitgliedern des Kreises, um vor ihnen nicht sowohl Sündenbekenntnisse abzulegen, als vielmehr wie ein Wasserkobold Ströme von Sünden aus sich herauszulfuthen und herabzustürzen. Was aber das wirkliche Thun anlangt, so hatte er dafür ein besonderes Abkommen mit sich getroffen. Es war z. B. nicht gestattet, Taback zu rauchen oder zu schnupfen; Letzteres hatte er nie gethan, Ersteres setzte er aber auch jetzt noch fort. Wie aber erklärt er dies? er thue es, um sich vor sich selbst zu demüthigen und sich im Sündengefühle zu erhalten. Es war ferner schwer verpönt, Kinder zu zeugen vor der völligen Wiedergeburt (und zu dieser war kein männliches Glied des Kreises—versteht sich, mit Ausnahme Ebel's—gelangt); Diestel zeugte Kinder; warum? wie erklärt er dies? es sei abscheulich, sagte er, aber es diene ihm, es führe ihn immer tiefer in die Ueberzeugung seiner Schwachheit, und dass er immer wieder von vorn anfangen müsse.

Niemand im Kreise verkannte ihn damals, man sah ihn als einen sehr fleischlichen Menschen an; Ebel gab sich mit ihm wenig, die Anderen ungern ab; die Heuchelei lag oben auf. So im Ganzen blieb er, und so blieb es mit ihm bis zur Zeit meines Ausscheidens aus diesem Kreise, im August 1825. Ein Jahr später haben sich auch Olshausen und v. Tippelskirch aus dieser Verbindung herausgelöst, und da es dann wohl rathsam war, im Kreise selbst einige Promotionen vorzunehmen, so mag Diestel wohl zu einer höheren Stellung berufen worden sein. Doch kann ich natürlich nicht sagen, welche besondere Aufgabe man ihm gestellt, welches besondere Amt man ihm übertragen haben mag; gewiss nur ist, dass er nichts

Anderes thun konnte, als wozu er fähig ist, und was er denn auch wirklich, so weit es zur öffentlichen Erscheinung geworden ist, gethan hat: er ist unglaublich grob, ansehend, polternd, schmühend gewesen, und natürlich ganz aus dem oben näher angegebenen taktischen Princip gegen den Teufel, d. h. er bezog sich entschieden lügend auf das Zeugniß Gottes, dem er ja diene, wenn er im Kampfe gegen den Teufel log.

Davon wimmelt es in seinen Schriften gegen Olshausen, die in der That nur Schmühschriften sind, von ihm jedoch kräftige, ja erschütternde genannt werden. Theils aus seiner Natur, theils aber aus der verkehrtesten Anwendung seiner juristischen Studien hat er sich eine der widerwärtigsten Arten ohnehin schon unwürdiger und verächtlicher Rabulistereien hier ausgebildet, welche ihm nun als Waffe zur Vertheidigung, ja als Stellvertreterin gesunder Logik dienen muss, so wie ihm die zügelloseste Grobheit als Surrogat der Entschiedenheit gilt. Doch ich breche ab; denn es ist in der That unmöglich, über diesen Mann geziemend zu reden, wenn man nicht in eine Ausdrucksweise gerathen soll, die man selbst eben so unziemlich für's Aussprechen, als für das Vernehmen halten muss.

5. Endlich sollte hier noch Einiges über mich selbst bemerkt werden. Dass ich es aber nicht unternehmen werde, eine Schilderung von mir selbst zu entwerfen, versteht sich von selbst. Denn von Vorzügen, die ich etwa hätte, zu reden, wäre widerwärtig, und mich gegen die Anklage Ebel's und seiner Anhänger zu vertheidigen, unwürdig. Seit einem Viertel Jahrhundert lebe ich an hiesigem Orte als Arzt, seit 20 Jahren als akademischer Lehrer bei der hiesigen Universität; es giebt keine Klasse der Einwohner hier, die mich nicht kennt, mit der ich nicht in näherer oder entfernterer Beziehung gewesen wäre; es kennen mich meine Mitbürger, meine Berufs- und Amtsgenossen, es kennt mich übrigens auch Deutschland als wissenschaftlichen Schriftsteller meines Fachs. Mögen Andere, mögen die, welche mich kennen müssen, ein Urtheil über meinen menschlichen, sittlichen, bürgerlichen und wissenschaftlichen Charakter aussprechen, mögen sie entscheiden, ob das, was Ebel und die Seinen über und gegen mich ausgesagt haben, wahr sein kann oder gelogen sein muss.

Denn in der That, sie haben mich solcher Vergehungen, solches Lebenswandels bezüchtigt, die sich nicht verdecken lassen könnten, von Allen also, die mich kennen, gekannt sein mussten, und wer ist an einem Orte mehr gekannt als ein alter Arzt?—Ich kenne

nicht einmal Alles, ja ich kenne nur einen Theil dessen, was Ebel und sein Anhang gegen mich vorgebracht haben; es ist dies aber so entstellt, zum Theil so in Unwahrheit und bössliche Deutung gezogen, theils auch so rein erlogen, dass ich in den mannigfachen Vermahnungen, die ich als Zeuge in dieser Untersuchungsangelegenheit zu überstehen hatte, es mir vom Herrn Inquirenten erbeten habe, mir eine genauere und weitere Kenntnissnahme der Injurien, Verleumdungen u. s. w., die jene Leute gegen mich vorgebracht, zu erlassen; dagegen mich zu vertheidigen hätte ich als etwas Schimpfliches empfunden, Injurienklagen aber gegen Personen zu erheben, die in Ehrensündigung Anderer ihr letztes Vertheidigungs- und Rettungsmittel suchen, war ich nicht geneigt; und Alles zu vermeiden, was vielleicht doch mich innerlich hätte erregen können, schien mir Pflicht. Nur Einiges will ich hier nennen und durch wenige erläuternde Worte begleiten.

a. Ebel hat gegen mich als Zeugen protestirt; ich wünschte, die hohe Behörde hätte seine Protestation angenommen, da ich alsdann grosser und schmerzlicher Unannehmlichkeiten überhoben gewesen wäre. Sein Grund aber, den er angab (andere und bessere hatte er gewiss; er wusste ja, dass ich ihn durchschaut, aber dies verschwieg er klüglich,) war: ich sei notorisch sein Feind. Notorisch! Wem ist dies bekannt? warum nennt er nicht solche That-sachen? Was habe ich je, auch nach meiner Trennung von ihm, Feindseliges gegen ihn unternommen? warum nennt er nicht solche That-sachen? warum nicht eine einzige? Ja, er, und nicht er allein weiss es, dass ich, lange schon von ihm geschieden, nicht aufgehört habe, wohlwollend gegen ihn gesiunt zu sein. Ich will ein Beispiel nennen: mehre Jahre nach unserer Trennung erkrankte er schwer und litt sehr lange; in der Stadt waren die schlimmsten, ehrenrührigsten Gerüchte über Grund und Ursache seiner Krankheit verbreitet. Wie wenig aber, wie schwierig wenigstens ein Arzt, der mit den früheren Lebensverhältnissen Ebel's nicht bekannt war, und dem aufrichtige Mittheilungen zu machen, er gewiss nicht geneigt war, den wahren Grund des Uebels werde finden, also auch die entsprechende Behandlungsweise werde anwenden können, konnte mir nicht entgehen. Oft nahm ich hierüber Rücksprache mit Olshausen, endlich entschloss ich mich, Ebel das Anerbieten zu machen, mit seinem Arzte, einem mir sehr lieben Kollegen, zusammenzutreten, um auf die für ihn schonendste Weise diesem meine Ansicht von der Natur (wenn auch nicht von den moralischen

Ursachen) der Krankheit mitzutheilen. Ebel liess mir eine schriftliche Antwort durch Diestel ertheilen, in welcher er das Anerbieten zwar ablehnte, aber für die grosse Liebe, die ich ihm dadurch zu erkennen gegeben, dankte, versichernd, sie habe ihm ausserordentlich wohlgethan. Und nun nennt er mich seinen Feind? seinen notorischen Feind?

b. Ebel behauptet, der Verlust an Einnahme, den ich durch die Trennung von ihm und den Seinen habe, schmerze mich und mache mich ihm feindlich gesinnt. Ich sage Nichts von der edlen Gesinnung, aus welcher solche Conjectur allein entspringen kann, thatsächlich aber ist Folgendes: allerdings habe ich aus früher schon entwickelten natürlichen Gründen äusserlich sehr durch meine Verbindung mit ihm gelitten, und meine Verhältnisse sind dadurch sehr gedrückt gewesen; dies jedoch mit Anderem, viel Schwererem habe ich geduldig getragen. Seit ich aber von ihm getrennt bin, sind mir freilich alle Ebelianer, von denen ich sonst ein Einkommen durch ärztliches Honorar gehabt, entgangen; mein Einkommen aber hat trotz diesem Verluste seitdem heinahe um das Dreifache sich vermehrt, was ich hiemit eidlich versichere.

c. Ebel behauptet, er habe mir noch einige sogenannte ärztliche Freunde gelassen und somit auch ein Einkommen, was er durch ein einziges Wort hätte aufheben können. Wahr ist hiervon nur, dass mir allerdings noch einige arme Ebelianer blieben, aber blos, weil er selbst sich immer mit den Armen wenig in Befreundung eingelassen. Wenn ich 10 Thaler jährlich für meine Gesamteinnahme von der damals mir gebliebenen Praxis bei Ebelianern von Jemandem erhielte, so würde dieses mehr als um die Hälfte zukommen, was ich auch eidlich versichere.

d. Ebel hat behauptet, er könne, wenn ich ihm das Beichtiegel zu brechen gestatten wollte, Dinge von mir aussagen, die meine Glaubhaftigkeit als Zeugen aufheben würden. Dies vielleicht beisspiellose Verfahren eines Geistlichen, dazu eines evangelischen, will ich hier nicht beurtheilen; es weilt und schändet sich selbst hinreichend. Ich habe ihm diese Erlaubniss ertheilt unter der Bedingung, dass mir seine Aussagen zur Einsicht mitgetheilt würden. Er hat Nichts ausgesagt, wenigstens ist mir Nichts mitgetheilt worden, was doch hätte geschehen müssen.

e. Diestel hat schriftliche Sündenbekenntnisse von mir zu den Acten gegeben. Woher hat er jene Papiere? sie sind von mir

niedergeschrieben und in den dazu bestimmten Ausdrücken niedergeschrieben auf ausdrückliches und hartes Andringen der Gräfin v. d. Gröben und der verstorbenen Gräfin v. Kanitz; dieser auch habe ich sie übergeben. Zur Niederschreibung und Auslieferung dieser mir grösstentheils aufgegebenen und aufgebürdeten Sündenbekenntnisse hat man mich genöthigt, wenige Tage, nachdem ich das Unglück gehabt, meine erste Frau durch den Tod zu verlieren, also in einer innerlich getrübt und zerrissenen Gemüthsstimmung. Zweimal hatte ich mich von Ebel und den Seinigen zurückgezogen (Kanitz sagt: weggeschlichen; nur wer mich kennt, weiss, dass man mir eben so gut, d. h. eben so unwahr nachsagen könnte: ich flöge, als dass ich schleiche). Jetzt sollte ich mit Stricken gebunden werden, und dazu benutzte man meine damalige Gemüthsstimmung. Ich habe diese mir jetzt vorgelegten Papiere nicht ansehen mögen, weil sie mich zum Theil mit Indignation über mich selbst wegen der Schwäche, die ich damals gezeigt, erfüllten. Ich bemerke nur das: wahrscheinlich hat man nur eine Auswahl von jenen Papieren dem Richter übergeben; sind aber alle mitgetheilt, so müssen sich darin mehrere sehr üble Dinge von und über Ebel befinden, unter Andern ein wirklicher Schurkenstreich! Nur solche, eben diese Papiere bewahrt man auf (ich habe Alles, was ich in Händen gehabt, bis auf ein Privatschreiben gleich nach meiner Trennung zu verbrennen für Pflicht gehalten), händigt sie nun aus und trägt sie zum Richter! Und wer thut's? Diestel, ein Geistlicher, dem ich jene Papiere eingegeben; Sündenbekenntnisse schleppt ein Geistlicher zum weltlichen Richter!!—Wer kann hierauf etwas Anderes sagen als: pfui! niederträchtig! Und was will er damit? was sollen sie beweisen? dass ich als Zeuge unglaubhaft sei, weil ich ein Sünder bin? als solcher mich fühle, bekenne? so argumentirt ein Geistlicher? ein evangelischer? so argumentiren Personen, die strengere Beichte abgefordert haben, als je in der katholischen Kirche geschehen ist? hat man ihnen nicht schon Gesinnungen als Sünden, als wirkliche Sünden bekennen müssen? Nun wahrlich, worüber soll man sich bei solchem Verfahren mehr wundern, über die Bosheit des Herzens oder über die Verleugnung jeder christlichen Natur?

f. Diestel hat Zeugen, 4 unglückliche Frauenzimmer, alle alt, alle von Natur wenig ausgestattet, körperlich sogar zum Theil gezeichnete Personen vor Gericht geführt, um anzusagen, dass ich sinnliche Begierden gegen sie gezeigt. Gelogen! ekelhaft und

dumm gelogen! Mädchen z. B. (allerdings sehr alte) sagen aus: ich küsse wie ein Wollüstling! Woher wissen Mädchen so Etwas? welcher Geistliche, doch nein, welcher Pfaffe hat ihnen gesagt, dass sie sogar dem Richter vorlügen sollen?—Ein anderes altes Mädchen sagt: sie sei mir ärztlich sehr verpflichtet, aber ich hätte ärztlich sie doch vernachlässigt und sie dennoch geliebt!—Eine steinalte Frau, Mutter mehrerer erwachsener Kinder, eine Frau, die ich nur ärztlich während einer Krankheit gesehen, in welcher sie an heftigem Speichelfluss gelitten, sagt: ich habe sie geküsst; wahrlich, dies hätte nur aus Barmherzigkeit und in grösster Selbstverleugnung geschehen können.—Doch genug von Dingen, die als wahrhafte Tollheiten erscheinen müssten, wenn sie nicht dennoch schlau und boshaft wären; denn im Protokoll stehen doch immer Namen und bestimmte Angaben, aber nicht die Bilder der Personen, nicht ihre Verhältnisse; es wäre ja doch wohl möglich, den Richter irre zu leiten!

Ich schliesse, wie ich begonnen, nicht Andere anzuklagen, nicht mich vertheidigen wollend mit diesen Zeilen.

Eine dunkle, verwickelte Sache, die einer psychologischen Erörterung bedürftig ist, wollte ich einigermassen erläutern.

Ist dies irgend wie erreicht, so ist der Schmerz, den ich beim Niederschreiben empfunden, reichlich belohnt.

Königsberg, den 15 July, 1836.

THE END.

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